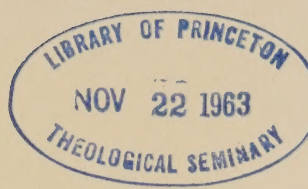


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IN MEMORY OF ME

*God's plan for men: present in history,
made active in the Eucharist*

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EDMUND FLOOD, O.S.B.

SHEED AND WARD — NEW YORK

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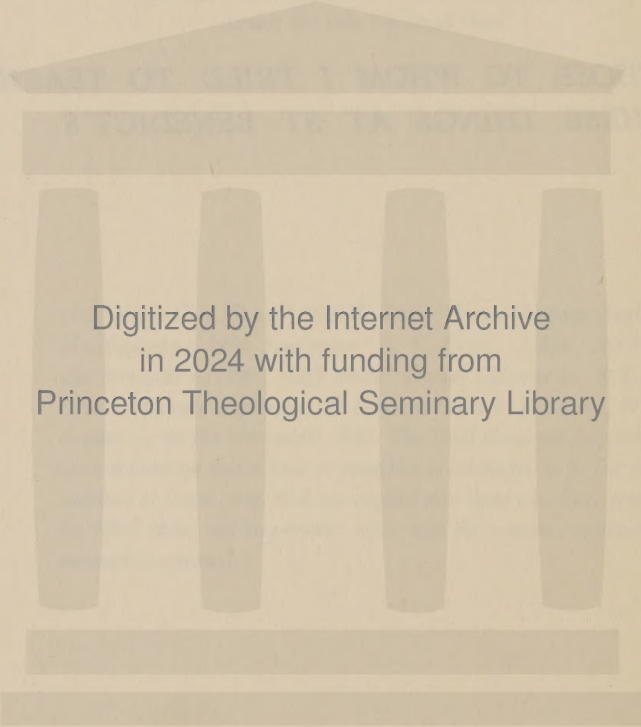
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TO THOSE TO WHOM I TRIED TO TEACH
THESE THINGS AT ST BENEDICT'S



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FOREWORD

Christianity is not a doctrine but an event. It is something that happened. If you reject it you do not deny a doctrine, you refuse to recognise what took place.

Christ's achievement, witnessed by men in Palestine, has, like every event on this earth, a past and a future. We live, and God has spoken to and acted on us, in history, in a developing chain of events. This book seeks to put before the reader the sequence of historical events which God has caused and is causing in order to share with us his own life.

To see these events clearly, it is necessary to view them as they appeared to the people who witnessed them, for it was to them that they were directly addressed. The effort required for adopting another people's viewpoint is compensated for by the greatly increased realism and significance that the events thus viewed, gain.

This book aims no higher than to be an outline, showing the massive structure of God's plan for us. For, once this is discerned, its many parts, thus seen in true perspective, will automatically take on a deeper meaning. The book aims at being informal, and, consequently, footnotes have been avoided. But to the scholar, some assurance is given in some notes at the back, of its having been written in the light of modern research.

I should like to acknowledge my special debt of gratitude to four people. To Father Cyprian Vagaggini of Saint André, Belgium, to whose understanding of this subject I owe more than to any other source; to my mother and father, who provided all the books I needed; and to Mr Paul Olsen, who lent me something of his gift for clarity by revising the typescript.

Ealing Abbey
London.

Edmund Flood, O.S.B.

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I

THE PLAN UNFOLDS

WE too often forget how odd of God it *was* to choose the Jews, or even to choose anyone at all. We forget who God is.

The Jews themselves did not suffer from this forgetfulness. Except when entrapped in their neighbours' vices, God's actions taught them of his supreme greatness. They learnt that everything that existed was his: made by him, arranged by him. To think of him as someone who hardly mattered, as a remote potentate to whom one might occasionally pay one's respects, did not occur to them. To their mind, God made the world and ruled it.

And they were his creatures. They might be prosperous, splendid, and successful. Sometimes they were; and they enjoyed it enormously. They relished power and display. But they knew that their magnificence compared to his was as a mustard-seed to a mountain, and that their success and all they had was his gift. They might not know what an atom was; but they did know what man was—someone made by God. And they thought that God did not make man casually, just so that he might live and then die. Man, they were assured, had a purpose.

Perhaps, for a moment, we should delay on this Jewish understanding of God. Never again did a people achieve quite so clear a conception of him. Hear a Jewish poet confronted with the night sky:

O God, our Lord, how wonderfully is your power
manifested in all the earth.

When I behold your heavens, the work of your finger,

The moon and the stars which you have fashioned—
What is man that you should have given a thought to him?

And then sometimes a Jew would consider how God's power swayed everything. All things lay within his gaze, subject to his power. Nowhere could you say that you were hidden from him:

Should I ascend into heaven, you are there,
Or should I make Sheol my bed, there also;
Should I lift up my wings towards the dawn,
Or settle in the farthest limit of the west,
There also your hand can seize me
And your right hand lay hold of me;
And I said: Surely darkness will hide me
And night be a cloak about me—
But darkness is not too dark for Thee,
And night is bright as the day.

* * * *

Such was God. But what did he do? What did he do with man?

God, we know, had a design for man. He decided not to enjoy his supreme power and loveliness, which his works barely hint at, alone. He wished to bridge the gulf between himself and man. His method was an interesting one.

He made man such that he would naturally develop in time. After Adam, in the name of his descendants, had refused the short cut God offered him, man must evolve through succeeding stages of culture before he would be ready to take an intelligent part in God's plan for him. Even then, as we shall see, the start was slow and painful.

God had cared for man mainly through natural indirect means, until time had ripened man for a decisive intervention. An enslaved nomad tribe existed in Egypt, living miserably under the cruelty of their masters. He rescued them, brought them out of Egypt into Arabia, and told them that they would henceforth be his own people. He would protect them, and give them a country of their

own, provided that they would recognise that he was their God, and therefore to be obeyed in all he commanded. To show them right conduct, and to make it clear to them that his claims on them were no empty ones, he imposed a law on them. The mutual undertaking was set in the form of a covenant between them: between him and this tribe. It was the source from which was to flow all subsequent relationship between God and man: this rescue and the covenant that sealed it. And it is important, before continuing, to give a glance at what had now taken place, at God's method of dealing with men, for the method he used then he continues to use today.

* * * *

He had chosen a definite group of people to receive his Covenant. This Covenant was a declaration that God loved this people. They, through no deserving of their own, were to have all the resources of God himself put to enrich them to the utmost. All they had to do was to prove themselves in deed his people. They must be guided and formed by him over the years as children are by their parents, so that they would be fit to receive benefits which at present they would not even be able to understand. In particular, they must accustom themselves to the deep conviction that there is but one God, for unless they saw God as the one God they would not see him as truly God at all. And unless all things are seen as coming from one who is truly God, truly all-powerful, ruling and directing all things, there is no chance of a deeply realistic understanding of anything. So they must be formed by God—it was the greatest of his benefits—to live realistically, not in a fool's dreamland, by acknowledging and practising the most central of all truths. His spokesmen—Moses and the rest—would guide them.

The position of this tribe, therefore, was that they had been specially befriended by God himself. There was no limit to what he wished to do for them as soon as they were ready for his gifts. Already he had given them freedom from a crippling slavery, rescued them from despair and misery. Now, as an indication

and pledge of what he would give them later, he was to give them a kingdom of their own: to their minds the highest of all possible benefits. But he knew that there were things of immeasurably higher value than wealth and material possessions. Gradually, he would lead them, at the speed with which their co-operation enabled, to the new and complete Covenant.

Names meant much to the Jew. A name denoted the nature or function of a thing or person. The names given to this new people of God are important for the understanding of future events.

First of all, as we have seen, they were called *The People of God*, a People who had been drawn close to God (that is, 'holy'):

For you are a holy People of the Lord, thy God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be his own People
privileged above all others.

The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose
you, because you were more important than any
people, for you were the least important of
all people, (*they were slaves*)
but because the Lord loved you.

The Covenant, as we have also seen, was the solemn seal put on this new relationship, which had been effectively set up in the Rescue from Egypt, always regarded as the birth of this People. They were essentially the People of the Covenant, and their gathering together to accept it was their founding act. Hence they were also called *The Gathering of God*: those gathered, that is to say, to receive and always enjoy the increasing benefits of this Covenant. The name for this in Hebrew was 'Qahal' (the Gathering), which in English is 'Church.' Consequently, when Jesus was eventually to found 'my Church', he was founding a definite, organised society, a Gathering to receive and live by a new Covenant. In fact Jesus constantly used expressions whose meaning came from their use in the Hebrew past. And what he did was simply to continue, though to a level which no one could previously have suspected, the ways God had always used with his creatures. There was a very real continuity between the Old and New Testament dispensations. An acquaintance with the

institutions and names of the one throws much light on the other.

Let us look, finally, at one other conception the Jews were given of the relationship now set up between God and themselves. God called himself their shepherd, and they were his flock. In Palestine the shepherd's task was a responsible and hazardous one, for the grass being scanty, he would often have to take his sheep very far afield for pasture, and be alone with them for weeks in isolated places, their only protection from robbers and wolves. It required courage and real love for the sheep to care for them when one was far from the supervision of their owner and when a determined resistance to their attackers might easily be at the cost of one's own life. It is not surprising, therefore, that throughout the East from ancient times, a ruler who took a real care for all his people, gave them a wise and just rule, and made the weak and needy his special concern, was referred to as the Shepherd of his people.

And so the Jews were to know their God as a holy God—one who insisted on the just and the right, giving no countenance to evil, and as a God of inexhaustible possessions and power—but also as their Shepherd who tenderly loved them and meant to safeguard them in ever richer pastures.



After many vicissitudes due to Jewish fickleness, God brought his People into the land he had promised them and allowed them to make it their own. Therefore the first event we must notice in their history is the establishment of a monarchy.

This was a considerable step forward in Israel's development; and it did not take place until three centuries after their occupation of the country. A monarchy, they had perceived, had many advantages over their own, still tribal, government. Their neighbours, who had kings, wielded their armies much more effectively under the unified command of a king. And in peace-time, to have one leader instead of several, made government much more efficient. Accordingly, they made their demand of Samuel: 'A king will we have over us, that we also may be like all the nations.'

An Oriental king was a king indeed. No constitutional monarch he! A king was thought of as superman throughout the East. And from these Oriental ideas the Jews formed their conception of the Ideal king, whom they expected, at each reign, to have appeared. This conception played an enormous part in fashioning their history.

The Ideal king was held to possess almost divine powers, which came to him through the action of God's Spirit working in him. In himself, he was supremely holy and just, and an invincible warrior. But his importance lay not so much in his own qualities, as in the rôle they enabled him to play for his people.

This rôle was twofold. For he was God's representative to the people as well as the people's representative to God. His office was to be the bridge between them.

And so from one side he brought to the people from God every benefit: a just rule, prosperity, protection for the helpless, safety from the nation's foes. And through him, God was to fulfil the magnificent plan he had drawn up for his people.

There, in fact, lay his essential characteristic. It was through him that God was to fulfil the covenant, which always lay at the centre of Jewish interest. The splendid destiny God had promised to his people would be worked out by his viceroy, the king.

From the other side, he was to be the representative of the people to God, interceding for them to him. He was the High-priest, invoking, in the name of the people, God's help and his fulfilment of the covenant.

Such was the Israelite Ideal king. Many of his features had been borrowed from current Oriental thought. But the Jewish confidence that the ideal would be realised for them was based on the historical facts of the Egyptian rescue and the covenant by which God had given them tangible assurance of a great future. It was the way in which any Oriental would have envisaged an ideal future if it had been promised to him: this possession of an Ideal king from which all the promised blessings would flow to the people subject to him. God always spoke to men in a way they understood, making use, therefore, of expressions that had

significance for them. What he wanted to convey to them, through his prophets, was that he was promising them an ideal future. A Jew could understand an idea only graphically, by means of pictures. And this picture of an Ideal king with all the blessing that would necessarily come from him was the only one that could have conveyed that idea to a Jew. And the Messiah, of whom we shall speak presently, had to be portrayed in the same manner. He also was presented as the Ideal king.

* * * *

As Jewish history unfolded, and king succeeded king, the Ideal king had not appeared. As each heir apparent was born, and as each king was crowned, enthusiastic hope broke forth, and poets sang of him as the Ideal king come to them at last. But each time, their hopes were quickly smothered. All depended on the king and people obeying God's laws; and the Jews, king and people alike, were constantly contracting their neighbours' vices. In particular, they were led into a neglect of the uniqueness, and therefore of the very nature, of God. This was the very truth that God had chosen them to teach; for unless men would see their maker as the one master of all things they could not see anything aright, they could not live intelligently: that is to say, as human beings. The Jews' mission had been to bring this indispensable light to the world, and they were not implementing it. They were refusing to keep their side of the covenant.

In fact, the whole kingdom had long been decaying. For long it had been rotten with vice, and its territory was disintegrating. The prophets, who foretold worse disasters still, were not heeded. You must turn back to God by keeping his laws again, was their constant message; you must rid yourselves of your evil ways. If you refuse to do this your future hopes will be vain ones. The kingdom will be wrested from you, and yourselves made slaves. No Ideal king will come to you unless you repent.

These prophets were treated as fools. The Jews either laughed at them or killed them. But, in 587, Jerusalem fell. And those who wished to laugh now must do so as captives in a foreign land.

The nation which had looked forward so confidently to a brilliant future now found itself shattered, dismembered, and in abject ruin. Those who were allowed to remain in their country must live now in submission to their foes; and many of them would soon have to scatter to Egypt. About 30,000 were deported to Babylonia. As a nation, Israel seemed to have ceased to exist.

Now that the foretold disaster had broken upon them, it was all too plain that the prophets' threats had not been foolish, and that God was not ineffectual. He might bide his time, but always He was there. And eventually, for punishment or reward, He acted.

This proof of God's effectiveness made a profound impression on the Jews. It reminded them in practice, as they had always known in theory, that God, and not themselves, was the centre and ruler of the world, and that wisdom consisted in treating him as a kind father who was to be obeyed. As a consequence, they turned back to God. It was a turning-point in their history.

In their return to him, God met them half-way. Through his prophets he assured them that by their long disloyalty to him they had not forfeited their future hope. They were still his People; and the eventual fulfilment would come, however much their folly had postponed it.

Hitherto, this ultimate future had had to be described in terms of the narrow Jewish outlook: as little more than the temporal aggrandisement of a petty kingdom under the leadership of the Ideal king. But now the Jewish mind was expanding and God could shed a fuller light on what he had in store for them.

For one thing, the Jews were becoming more conscious of the greatness of God. Always they had known him to be *the* God: the God who made and ruled all things. But, half-consciously, they had thought of this all-powerful God's interests as being no wider than their own, limited to their own small nation. The suspicion that God's choice of them as his own People had had a wider purpose had hardly come to them. It was only now that this suspicion really began to grow, and then to flourish, in their minds.

God, it now came to them more clearly, is the God of all

nations, active in these other races as well as in Israel. He must have a purpose for them too. And it was now occurring to them that God had higher and broader aims than transitory world power. The ultimate happiness that he had promised would consist of a fuller existence than this one: more in line with God's greatness than with theirs.

It was a momentous discovery. For the first time in history man's vision was lifted beyond this level of existence to a fuller one. Not that it was easy to picture what that fuller life would be like. The images that a man can use can only come from the life of his experience: *this* life, which is beset on every side with limitations. It is impossible to picture that other life except in terms of this one. The most one can do is to use extravagant metaphors. But their effect is often to lend that supremely real life an air of unreality.

Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulty of grasping its nature, some did begin to think of the future kingdom not as a petty, though ideal, State, but as a fuller sort of existence altogether, in which God himself would exercise direct power. The possibilities of such a rule could not be exaggerated.

The rule of God would be exercised through an earthly king: the Messiah. And the Messiah was invested with all the attributes we have already seen in the Ideal king. In fact he was the Ideal king. But, with those who envisaged the direct rule of God, less emphasis was laid on God's merely human representative. By them, the exercise of the Ideal kingship was apt to be thought of as belonging to God in person. But the Messiah still occupied the forefront of attention for those whose idea of the future hope remained the merely political and national.

And so we find two different conceptions of the Messiah. The one that represented him as a merely earthly king in a temporal, this-worldly kingdom, was always the most popular. It was by far the easier to grasp. It promised gold and vineyards and power just like those one had seen but had always possessed too little of. Particularly in times of national or economic distress did such a hope surge up in the Jewish desire.

But the other conception, where God ruled directly and the Messiah played a slighter part, gained a great deal of ground with those who thought more of religious things. To describe this direct rule of God all the resources of Oriental imagery were mustered. It might be indescribable—and in fact it was. But an Oriental would never let it go at that. He must press into service, in this hopeless task, every image that the East provided. To us, the resulting picture may seem childish and bizarre. But the Jews did not have us in mind when they constructed their picture. They wanted a picture of something wholly other, of which they only knew that it was supremely happy and satisfying. Any attempt to describe it was doomed to failure. But to suggest by imagery something of its wonder is never a waste of time.

The Jews, then, for all the help the prophets gave them, did not succeed in penetrating the secrets of the future age. As a result, their conception of the Messiah was blurred. Sometimes he was merely human. At other times he was enveloped, and almost disappeared, in the brilliant power of God.

But all these phantasies and dreams were only attempts, suited to the contemporary mode of thought, to express a fundamental truth of which God had assured them again and again for centuries. At the beginning of their history there had been a rescue—from Egyptian slavery. This rescue had ushered in a new age when, from wretched slaves, they had come into unhoped-for possession of a kingdom of their own. Well, there would be another rescue and another New Age. Both would immeasurably surpass the former. God would rescue them. In some way or other, he would act through a man they knew as the Messiah. It would be a new fulfilment: the culminating fulfilment of the Covenant: the full realisation of the promise made on Sinai. In some form, there would be a Rescuer: there lay the central hope of this People.

* * * *

Just who would be rescued was indefinite. Not all of the originally chosen people would be fit for it. Many would have turned away from fealty to God.

But a remnant would be saved, a small seed from which would arise a new and world-wide People of God that had been planned and foretold by God throughout his whole direction of the progress of history. It would be the People of the Messiah; and the mark and very source of its special privileges would be an unequalled closeness to God.

What sort of closeness? It was described as being enlivened with the Spirit of God. What did this mean?

Perhaps the nearest we can get to it is by putting it as the creative, ennobling, powerful presence of God. The Spirit of God was the force that created the universe; gave life to men; raised privileged men—especially God's appointed rulers—further, to prophecy; and gave special gifts of justice and wisdom and holiness. It was essentially, therefore, something that gave very existence and then life and then ever high forms of life to things. It was essentially ennobling and enlivening, imparting more and more of the fulness and beauty that was in God to men. It was the manifestation and presence of God himself, but especially in so far as he lent man something of his own divine and vivifying power.

We have seen that the Spirit of God could be imparted in different degrees. It could give existence merely, as it did at the creation; or it could give a certain measure of wisdom or insight or any other special gift of God. God imparts value to men in different ways, different degrees. But we have also seen that the whole of God's plan was leading up to a time when he would give all he had to man. He loved him, and therefore wished to enrich him in full measure once he was ready to receive his boundless riches understandingly, like a man. Consequently, the New Age, the Age of the Messiah, when it came, would be when the Spirit of God would come fully, both on the new People's leader, the Messiah, and on the People at large, making them holy, full friends of God, made worthy of an intimate friendship and indestructible companionship with the serene and joyful person of God.

The prophets sometimes pictured to their hearers the happiness

of that coming of the Spirit for which their whole history yearned as its completion:

I will give you a new heart and breathe a new Spirit into you.
I will take away from your breasts those hearts that
are hard as stone, and give you human hearts
instead.
I will make my Spirit penetrate you,
So that you will follow in the path of my law,
remember and carry out my decrees.
So you shall make your home in the land I promised
to your fathers;
You shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Sometimes the coming of the Spirit was linked with the prophesying that would be an accompaniment of it and the portents of sky and earth which were imagined as accompanying the coming of God:

I will make myself known among you
I, the Lord your God, who alone am God. . . .
I will pour out my Spirit upon all mankind
and your sons and daughters will be prophets.
Your old men see visions and your young men too.
I will shew wonders in heaven,
and on earth blood, and fire, and whirling smoke.
The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon
into blood
Before the day of the Lord comes, the great, the
terrible day.

And of the leader of the new People, the Messiah, it was said:

The Spirit of God shall rest upon him—
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of wisdom and power,
The Spirit of the knowledge and true reverence for God.
And he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes
Nor decide by the hearing of his ears.
And he shall judge the poor with justice
And decide with fairness for the unassuming.

An Oriental, but vivid picture of the power and presence of God with his People. The promised event to which all history marched.

* * * *

In 539 the Persian king, Cyrus, who had conquered Babylon, allowed the Jews to return to their country. The 50,000 who returned were a changed people who were determined to put their confidence for the future in God. A sudden change of fortune, such as a weakening of the Persian empire twenty years after their return, immediately aroused in them an expectation of the immediate coming of the Messiah.

With the non-fulfilment of this expectation, their confidence began to wane. But once again they recovered themselves. And with Nehemiah, the governor, the whole people expressed their resolve to trust in God:

To thee, then, we turn, who art our God,
to thee, the great, the strong, the terrible God,
who dost not forget thy covenant,
or the mercy thou hast promised.

And 'all alike entered into a sworn undertaking that they would obey God's law given through his servant Moses.'

Great emphasis was laid on the public acknowledgement of God's sovereignty that took place in the Temple. Until it had been destroyed at the time of their conquest, the Temple had always been the centre of Jewish life. In whatever country a Jew might live, he would wish to make the journey to the Temple when he could. And the first task the Jews undertook when they returned from Babylon was the building of an altar of sacrifice:

The God of Israel must have an altar built to him if
the law given by his servant Moses was to be
obeyed, by the offering of burnt-sacrifice.

No more they dared to do, with hostile nations
threatening them all around, than erect God's
altar on its ruined base.

This emphasis on the necessity of sacrifice was no fetish. In

sacrifice, man achieves the fullest and noblest closeness to God that he can attain in this life. We must dwell on this for a moment.

A sacrifice is a series of expressive actions. The actions will usually be the killing or destruction of something, and then, if possible, its eating. These actions are performed only because they are the expression of this truth: that all things belong to God.

God owns all things. He made all things. And he alone, ultimately, rules them. This amounts to no more than saying that he is God. For these powers belong to him because he is God.

If you give back part of his possessions to God, and intend that part to stand for the whole, then this will be an acknowledgement of God's ownership both of the thing you are giving and, representatively, of all things. This is not, radically, mine, you are saying; it is yours. That is why I am giving it to you. And the same goes for all the rest of creation. The bit of it that I am giving back to you stands for it all. I am acknowledging to you that you own all things: that they and all of us depend on you for our very existence.

Man has always seen such a giving to God as a recognition that he is the master of all things: that he is God. It is seen as the recognition of the essential order of things—that they are all dependent on God. And this giving we call sacrifice.

And so the truth that sacrifice expresses is the central truth of the universe. And yet the expression of the truth is necessarily inadequate. For one thing, you cannot actually transfer a thing to God: you can only transfer it *from* yourself. Furthermore, the gift sacrificed only *represents* all things. Just as we have seen that the supernatural existence can only be described by metaphors, so can this recognition of God's sovereignty only be expressed by symbols. The very words we use, of course, are no more than symbols of our thoughts. It is natural to man to express himself by symbols. It is one of the restrictions to which man is subject.

And so the Jews, for their part, took the symbols which were then regarded as capable of expressing an acknowledgement of God's sovereignty, and used them for that purpose. Here, they said to God, are we; and we are your creatures. We are, by our

very nature, dependent on you: for you are God; you have made us; you are arranging our history and guiding us to our goal. We are joyful at this relationship of dependence on you. We are glad that you are our master, because you are great and powerful and good. Own us more fully! Rule us more completely! Only thus can we hope to come to our full stature; if we are completely under the sway of your loving will.

Obviously, this endeavour to acknowledge, and therefore to actualize more fully, God's ownership, this attempt to enter more closely into the influence of God's power and greatness, could take on various shades of emphasis. If you made sacrifice in the consciousness of sin, and that this sin of yours, being a usurpation of God's rights, had distorted the relationship between you and God, then, when you sacrificed, you acknowledged your sin to have been an infringement of God's absolute dominion and love for you, and you begged that a normal relationship should be restored. This 'Atonement' sacrifice, as it was called, was practised by the Jews.

Or a sacrifice could, for a Jew, be a re-assertion of the Covenant. The Covenant had, after all, set up the specially intimate connexion between this people and God. And so a sacrifice could be a joyful avowal of that bond.

Such was the annual Paschal feast. This feast was the remembrance of the Egyptian rescue. It was the annual calling to mind of God's rescue of the race in the past and of his intention of rescuing them in the future to a still more desirable freedom—what was called 'the New Age'.

That original rescue had been begun by means of a sacrifice of a lamb on the part of each family. Similarly, this ceremony consisted in each family buying and having sacrificed a lamb, and then, at a festive meal on the same evening (the Paschal Supper), eating the lamb that had just been sacrificed. Sacrifice itself, as we have seen, was an attempt to come more fully under God's rule; and here, evidently, this attempt had an especial reference to the longed-for future rescue. But the eating of the sacrificed lamb also had a deep significance for an Oriental.

In the East a man is thought of, metaphorically, as radio-active. Everything about him sets up a relationship, a contact, with those who come into touch with him in any special way. The present you give, for example, is thought of as suffused with your personality. It is an embodiment of your own life, feelings, and favour. The man who accepts it comes, thereby, into the sphere of your personality. The lives of both of you will now be indissolubly linked. It is the same with those who share a meal together—especially if it is a meal of any solemnity. Henceforward they are bound by special ties of friendship which it would be unthinkable to break.

Now the lamb these Jews were eating had been given to God. It had come, thereby, into contact with God, vibrant with his personality. Accordingly, when a Jew ate it, he felt he was eating something that belonged to God and put him into closest fellowship with him.

And so, every year, especially at this Paschal feast, the Jew reminded himself of the past and looked forward to the future, beseeching God to make his people fully his own, establishing his powerful rule definitively among them. Year after year this had happened; and still no rescuer had come. Alexander the Great had ended Persian rule; and, at his death, Palestine had fallen to Egypt. In 198 the Seleucids from Antioch had taken possession of the country. And that century had seen the attempt to force the Jews from loyalty to God, so that they might merge themselves into the culture of Greece. The attempt had been foiled by the heroic resistance of the Maccabees, who had eventually come to power, restoring to Israel its independence. But in the middle of the first century B.C. the Romans made Israel dependent on them, ruling through the Herodians and the Procurators. Israel was no more an independent nation. And the annual Paschal feast, with its looking forward to a Rescuer, was a poignant reminder of this.

* * * *

In the foregoing pages we have outlined a great plan of preparation. A plan of love and power. As a Jew understood it,

the most solid and promising thing about life was that God was exercising his power for the good of men, and wished to exert it to the utmost when man would let him.

The proofs for this stood like vast rocks over the receding track of Jewish history. For the conviction was grounded on irrefragable, huge, historical events. That God held the mastery of the world's elements and the destinies of men had been proved by deeds ungainsayable even by this hard-headed people.

Basically this was for them, as it should also be for us, the dominant fact of life. God rules. The Rule of God, which we wrongly translate as 'the Kingdom of God' (it wasn't a territory that was in point, but the active rule of God), meant, negatively, that the eventual outcome of all actions is arranged by God, and, positively, that there is a force overruling all events that is personal and full of wisdom and love. This is the dominant fact of life because it puts everything into perspective, giving it a totally new meaning. And once its implications are realised, it cannot but gladden and give peace.

The Jews knew, especially from their rescue, the Covenant, and the gift of their own land, that they were the favourites of God. He ruled and benefited all mankind, but them in particular. 'You shall be my People,' he had said at Sinai, 'and I shall be your God', when he had already proved, and was about to prove still further, what his special friendship meant in concrete terms.

The song of praise and joy that echoes this was sung by Moses and echoed for centuries in Jewish worship:

Then Moses and the Israelites sang praise to the Lord,
and this was their song:
A psalm for the Lord, so great he is and glorious;
horse and rider hurled into the sea!
Who but the Lord is my protector, the pride of my song;
who but the Lord has brought me deliverance?
Shall I not praise him, my own God. . . .
Jahweh, the warrior God, Jahweh, whose very name tells
of omnipotence! . . .

What power is there, Lord, that can match thee? Who,
as thou art, is august in holiness, who so
worthy of fear and of praise, who so wonderful
in his doings?

Thy mercy had delivered Israel; thy mercy should be
their guide. . . .

The Rule of the Lord will endure for ever and ever.

Elsewhere they spoke of its extent, for it 'extended over all things'
and 'over all the ages'. And then there was David's prayer, said
before the whole people:

Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of your father Israel
from the beginning to the end of time.

Thine, Lord, the magnificence,
thine the power, splendour and glory and
majesty are thine;

To thee all that is heaven, all that is on earth,
belongs,

To thee the Rule,

Of all princes thou art overlord.

Riches and honour come from thee

All things obey thy will

From thee power comes and dominion

Only thy hand exalts, only thy hand makes strong.

To thee, then, our God, we pay homage this day,
to thy glorious name bring renown.

And this pre-eminence of the God of Israel was founded on the fact
that he had made all things:

No, Lord, thou hast no rival; so great thou art, so
great is the sovereignty of thy name.

King of all nations, how should we not fear thee in
that majesty of thine?

The Lord is God in good earnest, a God that lives,
that exercises eternal rule. . . .

No place on earth or under heaven, you must tell the
nations, for gods that neither heaven nor earth
could fashion.

Power that made the earth, wisdom that orders nature,
 foresight that spread out the heavens!
 Our God is the God who made all things,
 Israel his patrimony,
 Jahweh, the God of hosts, his name.

We who are so accustomed to giving great significance to trivial things must find it difficult to be fully aware of the strength and joy of the Jew's conviction of the absolute Rule or Kingship of his God. We have seen, in this chapter, that he was conscious that this Kingship, which had already brought him so many benefits: existence, freedom, and the wealth and independence of his own land, had only yet begun its course. There would be a New Age when God would intervene decisively and fully, or, as he would put it, when God's Rule (as we say, 'Kingdom') would come. One day the time for the second best would cease. It would no longer be a question of an occasionally just and successful ruler and of the indirect companionship of the Ruler who loved. And the thousands of Jews forced from their land by political events whose cause had been the people's neglect of God would be brought back, this *diaspora*, to a full sharing in the life of God's people.

This is what the Lord God says:

I mean to go looking for this flock of mine, search it out
 for myself.

As a shepherd, when he finds his flock scattered all about
 him, goes looking for his sheep
 so will I go looking for these sheep of mine,
 rescue them from all the nooks into which they have
 strayed when the dark mist fell upon them.

Rescued from every kingdom, recovered from every land,
 I will bring them back to their own country . . .

Yes, I will lead them into fair pastures . . .

The lost sheep I will find, the strayed sheep I will bring
 home again; bind up the broken limb, nourish the
 wasted frame. . . .

They shall have a true shepherd at last.

They shall have a single shepherd to tend all of them now;

Who shall tend them but my servant David (= the Messiah)
He shall be their shepherd
And I, the Lord, will be their God, now that he rules on earth;
Such is my divine promise to them.
Renewal of my Covenant shall grant them security.
None shall doubt that I, the Lord their God, am at their side,
and they are my own People, the race of Israel . . .
Flock of mine, the Lord God says, flock of my pasturing.

Even in this one text we seem to have the uncertainty we have already met with whether it would be the Messiah or God himself who would exercise the immediate Kingship. These people, with their fertile, vivid imaginations, were able to conceive in many ways of the coming of the Ruler who loved them: sometimes as a meal with him, the meal being with them an occasion of the closest intimacy; sometimes as a new Rescue, with God himself leading them out of bondage to prosperity, but this time his splendour manifest to all; sometimes, as we have just seen, as a shepherd, rescuing the benighted, showing his love and care, leading his sheep to rich pastures. But when the time of fulfilment would arrive, this was sure: that God's coming to be King indeed would be the most gladdening event ever come to man. This coming of 'the Kingdom' would in truth be as Jesus was to describe it, 'the good news'. As God had spoken through his prophet:

Therefore my People shall know what it is when I exercise my
full power,
They shall perceive on that day that I who spoke am at hand.
How beautiful on the mountains
Are the feet of the herald
Who announces peace,
Who brings the good news,
Who announces salvation!
Who says to Sion:
Thy God now rules!

II

THE PLAN IS ENACTED

PART I. SOME MONTHS

1. *The Messiah at last.* The time had come. Jesus had this message: God's full intervention into the lives of his People had changed from a hope to a fact. The longing of centuries was to be satisfied.

The country was alive with expectation of such a message. Rabble leaders who had recently tried to stir up these people with false announcements of the Messiah's coming had found ready belief. The people were expecting this crisis to be upon them.

And a crisis it was. 'Turn back to God at once, for the time when God will rule is upon you' was the ultimatum that Jesus echoed from the Baptist. It wasn't a decision you could put off: you had to declare for or against the Kingdom here and now. You had to say whether you would submit to this full Rule of God and allow him to make you into something worthy of his friendship, or whether you would remain instead in a No-man's land of no values, no ambition, and no future.

And so here Jesus was, pointing steadily to the only thing that was significant any more. You could ignore it, but you could not alter it; the all-powerful God was closer and ruled more deeply than any man, in the present half-hidden scheme of things, could suspect. The final stage, when God would 'take over', had arrived.

2. *The Jews' Reaction.* That was the Jews' situation—and, of course, ours. God was very close: hidden, but close, and offering to be men's guide. That hiddenness was the difficulty. The Jews

had persuaded themselves that the Old Testament prophecies meant a revolutionary leader, a *coup d'état* under the Messiah, a brilliant military leader (assisted, no doubt, by God), who would expel the Roman overlords from the land. They wanted worldly success and an easier life. Jesus was not offering them that. He was offering them something higher, the highest gift man could be offered, personal closeness to God.

Even those who were willing to accept what he had come to give were perplexed by the apparent lack of *éclat* with which such a world-turning event as the coming of the Messiah should surely be accompanied. Jesus' way of life was so unpretentious, almost humdrum. He walked up and down the country, and all he did was teach. Outwardly, he differed very little from the ordinary Jewish rabbi, except that he drew larger crowds to his talks. True, if you listened to him, you were struck by the calm, authoritative certainty with which he spoke. And there was the fact, which it was difficult to overlook, of the miracles. But, on the whole, he could hardly be reckoned, in their way of it, an outstanding success. He was not quite what people had expected. They would go and listen to him, hoping perhaps for a miracle or a fight with the Pharisees; but they did not join his party: he asked too much; it was a risky thing anyway, since the Pharisees did not like one to, and *they* were the religious leaders, besides being able to make things difficult for you in business if they had a grudge against you. Above all, he just did not look the part of a revolutionary. There was no display, no outward brilliance.

Here, then, was God's closest friendship being offered to men and being rejected. The one thing that was capable of enriching a man's life to the utmost was simply being cast aside. To those who would accept nothing other than a revolutionary leader Jesus had nothing he could say. But those others, who were prevented from coming to him only because they could not reconcile the Messiahship he implicitly claimed with his lack of outward success, he would try to help to see that genuine success did not necessarily go with applause, or even with general acceptance. Growth, enormous growth, could take place almost

imperceptibly. This was the crucial question to which they must have the right answer. Once they could overcome their prejudice they would be able to recognise what he had to give them.

He tried to unravel this central difficulty by a simple and popular method of teaching. It consisted in telling a story with a point to it (they called it a parable). If you were at all willing to get the speaker's trend, you would see the point. If you were determined not to do so, no method of teaching could get his view across to you. Deep prejudice cannot be overcome by information.

And so, one day, pointing perhaps to a sower not far from the crowd he was addressing, he told them this story:

Here is the sower gone out to sow. And as he sowed, some grains chanced to fall beside the path, so that the birds came and ate them up. And others fell on rocky ground; and when the sun rose they were parched; they had taken no root, and so they withered away. Some fell among briars, so that the briars grew up and smothered them, and they gave no crop. And others fell where the soil was good, and these sprouted and grew, and yielded a harvest; some of them thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some a hundredfold.

This was his explanation of the train of events they themselves had seen unfolding over the last months. His story told of the scattering broadcast of the seed. That was what was happening here and now; you couldn't escape the fall of the seed, his message, upon you; a possibility of bearing much fruit was being offered to all, whether they would receive it or not.

Whether the opportunity was accepted depended on the recipient. And that, Jesus was showing them, was the explanation for the widespread rejection of his message, for the apparent lack of that *éclat* which the coming of the Messiah might have been expected to have.

His chief point was that the widespread rejection and opposition could not affect the ultimate success. The growth of the Kingdom had begun, in men—at present with little outward brilliance. But nothing could cheat it of the abundant eventual harvest.

3. *Current Events and Messiah's Offer.* Most of them would not let him open their eyes. He desperately wanted to because he loved them all and he knew what he had to offer them. He knew what God's full friendship was like, and that in comparison with it their purely material aims were pathetically trivial. To prefer the latter to the former was, soberly, lunacy: only not a funny sort of lunacy but unfathomably tragic. Since he loved them, he wanted to give them the best. But all they would have was toys: toys that would last them only a short life-time.

And yet the facts, to the unprejudiced, were very clear. It was simply a question of using your eyes, as Jesus himself pointed out again and again. John the Baptist's emissaries who asked him for an explicit assurance that he was in fact the Messiah were just told to draw the obvious conclusion from the events that they and everyone else had been witnessing in the last few months. His answer to them was both short and sufficient:

Go and tell John what your own ears and eyes have
witnessed;
how the blind see, and the lame walk, how the lepers
are healed, and the deaf hear,
how the dead are raised to life, and the poor have
the good news preached to them.

The man to whom Jesus restored his sight, and whom the Pharisees tried to browbeat into a rejection of him, put the matter more acidly yet. When these religious guides of the people told him that 'we know nothing of this man, or whence he comes', he replied:

Why, here is a matter of astonishment;
here is a man that comes you cannot tell whence, and
he has opened my eyes.
And yet we know for certain that God does not answer
the prayers of sinners, it is only when a man is
devout and does his will, that his prayer is answered.
That a man should open the eyes of one born blind is
something unheard of since the world began.
No, if this man did not come from God, he would have
no powers at all.

It should have been plain to everyone, therefore, that Jesus' offer was authentic. Everyone must have seen that God was exercising outstanding powers through this man; and this, with his own affirmation accredited by his miracles that the full Rule of God was upon them, could only lead a candid witness to an increasingly firm belief that he was God's accredited Messiah whose office had always been understood to be the offering of God's fuller friendship to man.

Thus Jesus' chief struggle, all through his public life, was to convince his hearers that the benefits of the New Age could only come to those who followed God's directions, and not the directions of pre-conceived wishes of their own. Most of his hearers would not accept this. Some waited to see the reaction of the Pharisees; and then, when eventually anyone who followed Jesus ran the risk of complete social and business ostracism (which was what expulsion from the synagogue meant), they hesitated even more. At any rate, it must have seemed reasonably certain that 'any day now' he would have finished with his 'religious teaching' and would really get down to using his evident power on the Romans and establishing the sort of Kingdom they had always imagined. The crux was that most of them would put their basic trust in their own ideas of prudence and the Kingdom and refuse to put themselves under the Rule of God which was so plainly showing itself to be in Jesus.

* * * *

Acceptance or rejection, there was the starting point. The facts were there. It was simply a matter of being willing to accept them. To those willing to do this, Jesus could make himself understood about the friend he wished to give them and the plans he was making for future years.

The goodness of this friend he loved to dwell on. In fact, he had to. Their ideas of God (and of themselves) had become distorted. The relationship, in their eyes, was like a business agreement. You kept that law God had stipulated as your side of the contract. You had done well. You had made yourself a success.

For now you could make your claim that God should fulfil his side of the contract, pay what he owed you, your right. You yourself had won your reward.

Obviously there was some truth in this attitude. Jesus' quarrel with it was that it obscured the more important truths. It ignored the primary fact that God had taken someone having nothing in him that qualified him for his friendship and made him a friend of God; and that the person thus raised up from nothing to everything by love, had done perhaps much to upset the plan of his patron by acting counter to his decrees, themselves nothing else than instances of his love, the directions of how to live up to this new life. The attitude ignored, therefore, that a love that would stop at nothing was the source of all man's well-being.

And it was as a God of love and compassion, whose special delight was to help the fallen and needy, overjoyed at their finding their true happiness, and not as an impassive businessman, that he would have them see his Father. Hence, when his opponents were condemning his association with sinners, he replied with a story making clear his and God's attitude to men:

When they found a great number of publicans and sinners approaching to listen to him, the Pharisees and the scribes were indignant; why does he receive these sinners (into his house), and admit them into his table-fellowship, they asked. Whereupon he told them this parable:

If any one of you owns a hundred sheep, and has lost one of them, does he not leave the other ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it upon his shoulders, rejoicing, and so he goes home, and calls his friends and neighbours together; Rejoice with me, he says to them, I have found my sheep that was lost. Thus God will have more joy over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable persons who have committed no gross sins.

Or the same truth by a similar story:

Or if some woman has ten silver pieces by her, and has lost one of them, does she not light a lamp and sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls her

friends and her neighbours together; Rejoice with me, she says, I have found the silver piece which I lost. Thus, I say to you, God will rejoice over one sinner who repents.

They were charming as well as revealing pictures. A sheep, they knew, would sometimes stray from the flock and be lost sight of as the shepherd led his flock to a new pasture. Usually it would lie down helplessly, unwilling to move or even stand up, completely at the mercy of any robber or wolf that might come across it in the shepherd's absence. What good fortune to find the sheep unscathed by either sort of marauder! The only way to carry it over a long distance would be over the shoulders. The trouble and anxiety is forgotten in the joy of having brought back to safety that which could so easily have been lost for ever. In both pictures it is the joy of God at good coming to one he had always loved, but who had seemed so impervious to his love, that is brought before us.

4. *The Way Things would Go.* What plans was Jesus making for the future? How deeply his followers understood the glimpses he gave of it we cannot say. But to those who would listen to him, at least his general trend on the subject must have been clear. He was adding a new sight on God and how he acted with men. What it came to was that the Father was acting through his Son, and that the Son, in his turn, shared out his power with men themselves. God had come close to men: first by becoming man, and then by giving much of his power to them. Such was to be the essential pattern of all that would take place in the world: the Father acting through the Son, who, in and through man (and in the power of the Holy Spirit), would bring man to the Father. That pattern we shall see is the central one in the Mass. It is there because the early Christians, who formed the Mass, thought of life as being shaped like that. That is how, they thought, God is acting in us, in history. That is how things are actually going. Since it is so central to an understanding of the Mass, and even of Christianity and our own lives, these last two sections of this Part will speak of how Jesus revealed this truth to his hearers and will try to get

that truth into clearer focus. The thought of how God himself acts is too profound to be very simple. But with reflection its main lines become clear.

Before recounting Jesus' words, we must recollect that the whole history of the Old Testament had been concerned to show the primal truth that God (the Father) was the source of all life and of all that exists. All things come from him. He gave them to be used according to his plan for men whose exact nature was not yet known but whose main purpose was to enable men to approach nearer to him. In other words, and to put it rather crudely, you had a two-way stream. All things come *from* the Father, and the object was to lead men *to* the Father. That was the lesson that one historical event after another had been designed to teach them: from the Father came man and all his possessions; they would only exist to good purpose if they led him into God's fuller favour.

Their land, for instance, had originally, with all other things, been created by God. Through their rescue from Egypt and many other events he had given it to them. They had seen the disasters that always eventually overtook them when they did not use it in the way his wisdom decreed. The happiness of their future was shown to depend on their using it as his gift, according to his directions whose eventual result they could not at present see.

Thus they had been introduced, in a way they understood through historical events, to the Father as the only person worth serving and obeying, the Father both the origin and the goal of all things.

Now Jesus was filling out that Old Testament picture of the world and of how it should go. He was showing himself as a person not merely through whom the Father acted—for the Father acts through everyone, but as the Father's fully accredited Viceroy. Deriving his power from the Father, he could exert the full measure of the Father's rule and assume his special offices without further mandate from him. We know from the story of the paralysed man that Jesus forgave sins. That was one prerogative of God's he unhesitatingly assumed. But there were two other

actions in which he did this perhaps as strikingly. By these he set up the new order. They determined the way events would go in future: how God would act, what man should do. If we first consider precisely what took place on these occasions, their immense significance will become more evident to us.

At the beginning of his public life Jesus had given his disciple, Simon, a nick-name or title, 'The Rock'. (In English the translation is 'Peter'). The imposition of a name, in the Old Testament and with the Rabbis, was used to signify some future event: especially a function or benefit promised for the future. For some months the significance of Jesus' having given Simon his name of 'The Rock' had received no explanation. But when Simon, to Jesus' question who he thought he was, had avowed Jesus' position as 'the Christ, the Son of the living God', Jesus, in his turn, had announced Simon's position, thereby explaining the previous imposition of the name. He replied thus to Simon's avowal:

- verse 17 Truly fortunate are you, Simon, son of Jona,
for it is from no human source that you can have
derived this knowledge (i e. that I am the Christ,
the Son of the Living God)
it must have been revealed to you by my Father.
- 18 And I tell you this in my turn, that you are the Rock,
and it is upon this Rock that I will build my (new)
Church (= People of God)
so that the gates of Hades will not prevail against it;
- 19 And I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of God,
so that whatever you shall bind on earth shall be
bound in heaven,
and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be
loosed in heaven.

Some words of explanation are necessary before we can pierce through the Hebrew idiom Jesus was using to the rich content of these sentences. Let us begin by noticing that in this typically Hebrew utterance the first lines of verses 18 and 19 give

the theme-fact of the verse, and the rest of the verse the consequences of that fact.

In verse 18 Jesus tells Simon the consequences and thus the purpose of his having the function of 'The Rock'. It is because on him Jesus' People of God will be founded. We notice that there is to be a new chosen race, a new Israel or People of God, and it is to be Jesus': Jesus was to build it and own it—not God the Father as had been the case with the old Israel.

A Jew understood well enough what building on a rock meant. If you wanted your house to be permanent and not at the mercy of storms and floods you had to find some ground where there was rock. Hence the image lent itself readily to speaking of constructing anything impregnable and permanent. It was often used in common speech for this purpose.

We remember how Jesus himself had used it (Matt. vii, 24-27). And a roughly contemporary sect had used the expression in a way even more like Jesus was using it now, for it had described itself, the community of Qumran, as a citadel or house built on a rock which withstands the ferocious attacks of the devil by the very fact of God having built it on a rock.

Jesus immediately proceeds to give the same reason for his having built his house or community, his new People of God, on a rock: 'so that the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.' 'The gates of Hades' refers to the rule of Satan, which is also conceived as a citadel or house. These two castles, if you like, are opposing each other. Jesus knew that Satan would spare no effort to demolish a house such as he was building whose whole endeavour was to confer unlimited good. He was giving his guarantee that Satan would not prevail. And the reason for Satan's unsuccess would be that Jesus had built his community on Simon whom he would make unshakably firm.

Whence would Simon derive this strength? Jesus now provides the answer: 'I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of God.' 'The Kingdom of God', as we have constantly seen, meant this direct Rule of God in the New Age which it was Jesus' life work to introduce. And in Jewish idiom 'giving the keys' of something

meant conferring absolute power over that thing, so that, for example, God was spoken of as retaining the key to the rain, to birth, and to restoring life to the dead. And the rest of the verse only reinforces this conferring of full authority, for 'to bind and to loose' meant the power of interpreting the Law and the power to decide who might enter and who should be expelled from a community.

Hence Jesus' intention was perfectly clear. He was acting as the Father had done in the granting of the old 'Covenant and the establishing of the organised society which had benefited by it. Jesus, by his own sovereign power, was founding the new society, which was to be given a new and richer Covenant, founding it on Simon whom he made his steward with full powers of government.

And so the Father, in this new order of things, was acting through another person who himself had sovereign rights of founding the new Israel and delegating power over it. And this other person, who not merely borrowed something from the Father but derived and shared everything from him, is expressively called his Son. In that full possession of all the Father is, he could appreciate, as no one else could, what the Father is like and how every good thing comes from and reflects him.

This brings us to the profoundest truth of all. The life of the Trinity is of the same pattern as that of the activity of God in the world which we have just been considering. It too is a life which is all derived from the Father. It is the Father's supreme nature being fully shared by the Son and Holy Spirit, fully owned, understood, loved, and appreciated by them. They derive all they are from the Father. Their lives consist in enjoying that gift, enjoying him, turning to him.

Jesus was simply bringing this sort of life to man. In the old dispensation the great truth conveyed had been that the Father was the source and goal of all things. Now it was being revealed that the Father acts through his Son, and Jesus was to make it clear that it is through him that we have access to the Father. That is the structure of all that exists, both divine and created: all

reality, possessed fully by the Father, is given by him to the Son; and the Son's joy in this possession, his joyful appreciation of the Father, is the second, the counter-movement, of the divine life. So with us: all that is of any value in anything we are and do, comes from the Father through the Son, while in the counter, completing movement we, thus enriched, are brought through the Son to the Father himself. Life at its best, therefore, the life of the Trinity (for Jesus was to show later that the Holy Spirit makes a part in this life), where all that is good is possessed and vigorously acted on in this twofold movement, was to be reflected in our lives. The life of God was to be shared by us.

We must at least mention the other action of Jesus where he seemed to step into the place the Father had occupied in the Old Testament. For we remember that the Father, as the loving founder and ruler of his People, was called there its Shepherd and the People his Flock. In the New Age, Jesus was to exercise, he said, this power:

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, whereas the hireling, who is no shepherd, and does not claim the sheep as his own, abandons the sheep and takes to flight as soon as he sees the wolf coming, and so the wolf harries and scatters them. The hireling, then, takes to flight because he is only a hireling, because he has no concern over the sheep. I am the good shepherd; my sheep are known to me and know me; just as I am known to my Father, and know him. And for these sheep I am laying down my life. . . . This my Father loves in me, that I am laying down my life, to take it up again afterwards. . . . All that I do in my Father's name bears me testimony, and still you will not believe me because you are no sheep of mine. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them everlasting life, so that to all eternity they can never be lost; no one can tear them away from my hand.

The claim Jesus was making to be the Shepherd of the new People of God was not of itself a claim to a divine function. We remember the constant swing in the Jewish hope for the future

between God exercising direct rule and rule through an intermediary, the Messiah—David, as he was sometimes called. The claim would have been interpreted, therefore, as one to the Messiahship, a fulfilment of this prophecy for instance:

They shall have a single shepherd to tend all of them now;
Who should tend them but my servant David?
He shall be their shepherd
And I, the Lord, will be their God
Now that he rules them on earth.
Such is my divine promise to them.
Such a covenant I will grant as shall give them security.

Yet in the first part of this prophecy, which we have already quoted earlier, God spoke of *himself* as the Shepherd of the new People.

5. *Who the Messiah Was.* It is possible that Jesus might have been accredited by God with such powers even if he had not been God. Those two incidents just related were concerned more with his activity than with his own self. But there were at least two occasions when something of his own identity was seen, when the inmost secret of his personality shone, for a moment, outwardly.

On one of these occasions Jesus was beginning his work of equipping his closest followers with his own power. They were to join him in establishing the Kingdom, and so he sent them out, seventytwo of them, to perform miracles as he had performed them, so that they would share in his task of showing that God was acting through them. They returned to him, happy in the successful performance of his commission, and the situation impels Jesus to an outburst of gratitude to the Father:

I give praise to you, Father
Lord of heaven and earth
that you have hidden these things (the secrets of
the Kingdom) from the wise and the prudent
and revealed them to little children.

Here Jesus' joy at his Father's goodness to his friends focuses on their similarity to some other 'little children' to whom the Father had revealed the great truths in contrast to those who relied on their own wisdom. For any Jew would have been familiar with the story told by Daniel of how Nabuchodonosor had had a dream, and, troubled with his inability to interpret it, demanded that those of his subjects who prided themselves on special knowledge of the occult should assemble and tell him both what he had dreamed and what its meaning was. They had failed, and were sent off to execution, Daniel and his three friends being put with them. Daniel begged time, and asked God to reveal to him 'the great secret' about the passing away of earthly kingdoms and the setting up of God's Kingdom, which was the lesson the dream had been given the King to teach. And what he had refused to show to the self-reliant, God had revealed to Daniel and his friends who had put their faith in him. The Old Testament story gives us Daniel's hymn of thanks which plainly inspired the one of Jesus.

The whole texture of Jesus' prayer shows us that it was in their happy resemblance to Daniel and his friends who had won favour with God that Jesus saw his own friends as they came back from their work. The Pharisees, relying on their own skill, had achieved as much as had Nabuchodonosor's self-reliant sooth-sayers: nothing. But the secret that held the key to all happiness—the secret to the ways of the Kingdom, these followers of his who relied on him had been given.

His attention then moves to how the gift came about, and it is here that we catch a glimpse of his nature. His thanks to the Father continued:

Yes, Father, (I give praise to you) because such
has been your good pleasure.

My Father has entrusted everything into my hands.
No one knows what the Son is, except the Father.
And none knows what the Father is, except the Son
And those to whom it is the Son's good pleasure to
reveal him.

Here it is still the comparison with the story of Daniel that gives shape to his expression. There Daniel, who had been given the secrets of the Kingdom and had eventually come to wield God's power, had foretold a certain 'Son of Man' who would be granted absolute and everlasting rule, and who would, therefore, have imparted to him full knowledge of the Kingdom.

Jesus knows that he is the fulfilment of the prophecy in a sense that Daniel could hardly have conceived. And he is conscious, too, of being the fulfilment of that other prophecy which his Father had repeated on the occasions of his Jordan Baptism and his Transfiguration:

This is my Son (the Greek word could also mean 'Servant')
whom I will uphold,
my beloved one in whom I delight.

The words Jesus used in his prayer on this occasion would have shown to his Jewish followers that he was thanking God for his being the fulfilment of these prophecies. He was overjoyed because this fulness of power and complete knowledge of the ways of this Kingdom that God had promised to his future representative he himself held in his hands. And he was so overjoyed because it enabled him to show his friends, and bring them close to the person he prized above all others, the Father. Jesus alone was in a position to do this because he was on the same plane of existence as the Father and could thus fully know him. Only the mind of God is big enough to comprehend the nature of a divine person: that is why he said 'No one knows what the Son is, except the Father. And none knows what the Father is, except the Son.' Jesus' chief interest, here as in all his utterances, was with his friends. But for once he mentioned, almost in passing, the equal footing he was on with the Father. He too possessed the knowledge, and therefore the existence, of God. And he had come to share this, in some way, with men.

On one other occasion Jesus gave to anyone who would listen every chance of recognising something of what he was. And to

understand Jesus' method it is necessary to recollect very briefly what we have already gathered as to one or two of his hearers' ideas on certain subjects.

First, the Jews thought of God primarily in his action and his power. They thought of him more as someone who appeared outwardly in actions indicating divine power than as someone who possessed a divine nature. In other words, they attended much more to what he did than to what he was. Actions told more with them than nature.

Secondly, we should recollect that there were two views on what the New Age would consist in: God's direct Rule, or his Rule through a Messiah.

And lastly we should remember that the principal lesson of their history had been that there is but one God, the only source and goal of all creation.

Jesus, on the occasion we are taking here, had just made another cure, this time of a paralytic. This happened on a Sabbath, and the Pharisees made their usual objection, 'You have broken the Sabbath.' Jesus takes them up in a new way. He refers to the current idea that God's work of salvation never ceases, even on the Sabbath: 'My Father has never ceased working, and I too must be at work.' His meaning was perfectly clear to the Jews. This made the Jews more determined than ever to make away with him, that he not only broke the Sabbath, but spoke of God as his own Father, thereby treating himself as equal to God. And it is possible that their difficulty was an understandable one. Was Jesus giving himself out to be God? If so, he was contradicting a truth that God himself had instilled into them throughout their history.

Jesus tried to unravel their difficulty. He recognised that some were shocked for an altogether praiseworthy reason. For these he made it possible to see that his claim to be God did not, in fact, contradict their deepest conviction. His answer was that he did indeed have the same powers as the Father, powers that only belonged to God, but that the Father was their source. The Father, in other words, was still the source and goal of all reality, all

power. But the Son held equal power only by the very fact of his being the Son, of his deriving it from him.

That was the explanation Jesus offered of his activity, of that power of his exercised over illness, death, and sin, visibly, effortlessly, independently. The Father was working in him. He had been given all the Father's power, could do what the Father did. There was no need to wrestle with an attempt to explain completely how this could be. It was enough that he had shown that it could be reconciled with the oneness of God which they rightly clung to. All that was necessary for the moment was that they should recognise him as someone in whom the Father ruled and appeared to them in an outstanding sense, someone who had unlimited power and authority and must be harkened to as one would to God. For as yet they had only seen the rim of the matter:

Believe me when I tell you this,
The Son cannot do anything at his own pleasure,
he can only do what he sees his Father doing;
what the Father does is what the Son does in his turn.
Just as the Father bids the dead rise up and gives them life,
so the Son gives life to whomsoever he will. . . .
As the Father has within him the gift of life,
so he has granted to the Son that he too should
have within him the gift of life.

6. *Conclusion.* So the Messiah had come, and to those whom prejudice and material greed did not blind, this is what he was trying to make at least partly visible—partly, for the Spirit would strengthen their understanding afterwards. He said so much more; but for the purposes of this book these pages must suffice. For we are following only the main lines of God's action with man. Once the main lines are sketched in, the rest of the picture increases in significance and can be completed to better effect.

We have seen how the plan unfolded. We are now seeing how it was fulfilled by Jesus. Later we shall see how it is fulfilled in us at each Mass we attend, for the plan is of a vitally present significance. One day, it will be fulfilled in complete happiness in God's

home. Those four stages of the working out of God's action in man are the very shape of man's history.

PART 2. A MEAL

The sun was setting over Jerusalem. The city was immensely full of people: but this always happened on the Passover Feast. Everything else seemed normal as the sun sank into the hill.

The whole city was waiting. The Paschal meal, which they had been preparing that afternoon, could not be eaten until the first star shone out. And in every practicable place, even on the roofs, the family groups were assembled, with the lamb sacrificed in the Temple, the wine, the bread, and the herbs, in readiness for the coming meal. The lamb, which formed the main part of this meal, had been killed and sacrificed to God in the Temple that afternoon. That ceremony had been a solemn renewal, a reiterated public expression, of that privileged, Covenant relationship these men had with God. And here was the instrument of that expression, the sacrificed lamb that had sealed their relationship with God, to be eaten. The eating was a last and culminating token of all that sacrifice meant, of the intimacy it established between God and themselves.

Hence it was a solemn meal, the Pasch. Hence the rule that you must recline for it: not sit, as you did normally. And there was a group of thirteen men, in one of the innumerable rooms in Jerusalem, who, like everyone else, were reclining on rugs or mattresses, strewn on wooden stands, set round a low table. This was Jesus' family group. He was the chief; the others were his intimate friends and heirs.

Outwardly, it was a normal Jerusalem evening in April: just like one you might see today. But there was a tenseness, an expectancy. We have seen that the Paschal meal harked back to the Rescue and Covenant of the past. But it also looked forward to the future, the future rescue. 'On this night they were saved, and on this night they will be saved' was an old saying of theirs. The Messiah would come to set them free on this night, as, once

before, on this same night, they had been set free in Egypt. This conviction, far from waning, gripped them now more strongly than ever. In fact, of recent years, the tense expectation of this night had shown itself in repeated rebellions against the Roman occupation. This longing for a rescuer, this longing for the promised New Age that must now, it seemed to them, be so near, filled the minds of the Jews on this night particularly, and found expression, again and again, in the ceremonial of the meal they were just beginning.

And so the meal began. The hands were washed; the wine of the first cup of the feast was mixed with water, and Jesus, acting as head of the family on behalf of the whole group, blessed God for it:

We bless You, Jahweh our God, King of the World,
who has given to Your people, Israel,
this festival of joy and remembrance.

There was now a preliminary dish of lettuce and bitter herbs dipped in a fruit *purée*. It was meant to stimulate the appetite; the bitterness of the herbs was to remind them of the bitterness of the life their nation had been forced to lead under the foreman's lash until the liberation they were that night celebrating. But before Jesus dipped his lettuce into the *purée* a look of great sorrow came upon him. He looked round upon the circle of his friends.

Believe me, believe me, one of you is to betray me.
(It was here that the incident of Judas occurred).

By this time the meat had been put on the table, a piece set before each. There was the second cup of wine. And now began the part of the evening where the symbolism of the meal was most forcibly brought home to each man present.

First there was a sort of questionnaire put to the president of the meal by one of the company. This must ask what was the significance of the ceremonies they were using at the meal. In answer the president told the story of God's rescue of the race

from Egypt and showed how the special food set before them should recall that event to their minds.

Of the Paschal Lamb he would explain how, because of its sacrifice and the sign of its blood, God had spared the families of their forefathers and marked them out for freedom. Then he would lift up in turn the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread telling them how the former represented the bitter life their forefathers had led before God set them free, and how the latter stood for the haste in which they had had to flee Egypt under God's protection, no time being left them to leaven the dough.

Full of thoughts of gratitude now for this wonderful liberation from the pitiful condition of slavery and the establishment of their race into a independent nation, the assembly now gave thanks to God for having effected this rescue. First there was an invitation to praise:

Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise and worship him
who has done all these things for our fathers and ourselves.
He has brought us out of bondage into freedom
out of oppression to joy
out of mourning to festal gladness
out of darkness to great light
and out of slavery to redemption
Therefore let us sing before him again with song.

This was followed by a hymn which praises God's greatness in himself and his condescension and goodness to others. It is a song of praise and gratitude, chiefly for that Egyptian rescue to which everything was owed.

The hymn ended, Jesus rose from his reclining position. He sat up, and took a cake of unleavened bread. He recited the blessing for it in the name of all. This blessing was a kind of Grace before the meal, and was the first of the two Graces, or prayers of Thanks (Eucharists). The normal grace ran:

Praised be you, O Lord our God, King of the World,
who causes bread to come forth from the earth.

With this the assembly must identify themselves with what had to be a loudly pronounced 'Amen'. This said, and the president must tear off for each person a piece of the bread and give it to him. In the ordinary Paschal meal, this demonstrated that all had been included in the blessing, and knit them, before God, into one table-fellowship. Normally silence accompanied these actions. But on this occasion Jesus spoke over the bread as follows:

This is my Body that will be surrendered up for you
Do this for my commemoration.

The first Grace just mentioned, with the attending distribution of bread, was the introduction to the meal itself. They had reminded themselves of their protector; of the massive power he was capable of wielding and of the irresistible love that he had put at their service. The King of the World, its maker and ruler, was the great lord who had befriended them. No wonder they told over his triumphs with an exultant pride and gratitude. No wonder they looked forward to his future rescue of them with confidence. And now came the centre of the meal with the eating of the Paschal lamb.

The lamb to be eaten at this meal had been sacrificed that afternoon in the Temple. We have already seen how the eating of what had, by sacrifice, become a possession of God's, was considered to put the eater into especially close intimacy with God.

After this came the conclusion of the meal, with the drinking of a third cup of wine over which another blessing was spoken. For this Jesus rose once again from his recumbent position. He took the cup in his right hand, lifted it up a span above the table, and, with his eyes on the cup, said the Grace for all. The normal Grace ran as follows:

Praised be you, O Lord our God, King of the World
who feeds the whole world with goodness, grace and mercy.
We give thanks to you, O Lord our God,
that you have caused us to take possession of a good and
large land.

Have mercy, O Lord our God, on Israel, your People
and on Jerusalem, your city,
and upon Zion, the dwelling-place of your glory,
and upon your altar and upon your Temple.
Praise be to you, O Lord, who builds Jerusalem.

The company said 'Amen'; and Jesus passed round the cup, speaking these words over it:

This is the chalice, the New Covenant in my Blood.

Jesus' consecration of the bread and wine both took place within the framework of a prayer of joyful and grateful praise. Especially the second of them (called a 'Eucharist'), coming as it did at the solemn close of the meal, summed up the events for which Israel was chiefly thankful to God, and which had already been dwelt on in the hymn before the Grace said over the bread: God's goodness, the well-spring of all his benefits; his adoption of Israel as his People, which found ultimate and concrete expression in his establishing this race, once slaves, into a rich kingdom; his continual presence with them; and his promises for the future ('O Lord, who builds Jerusalem [in the future]'). Of ancient origin, these prayers of thanks still followed their primitive form of a cry of admiration and joy at the Being who is just, reliable and loving, the strong Shield of Israel; and this was followed by an account, told with gratitude and admiration, of the great deeds he had wrought for his People. It is easy to see that there could have been no more apt setting for the consecration than this one provided in the Jewish Paschal meal. We shall notice how the early Christians retained and developed it.

But what was the precise significance of the words of consecration themselves: words that had no counterpart, and therefore no explanation, in the Jewish ceremony Jesus and his friends were enacting?

It is certain that the accounts of the Last Supper left us by the Evangelists are no more than very brief summaries of what took place. In the Supper itself, Jesus must have prepared his disciples for these astonishing words and developed them when spoken.

But even from the bald summary that has come down to us, scholars have been able to point out a very rich meaning.

We may examine the words over the bread first:

This is my body that will be surrendered up for you.

'Body' here means the whole person, and not the body without the soul. Jesus could never have put the sentence in this way unless he intended a clear reference to a person well known to his disciples: a person foretold in prophecies, centuries before, who would come and die to save his comrades. For that was to be the role of 'the Servant': he was to suffer, the prophet had declared, in the place of and for others. Here, Jesus was saying, is the person of whom the prophets wrote as follows:

It was our suffering that he bore. . . .
He was bruised for our sins. . . .
He was afflicted, but he was resigned,
And he opened not his mouth;
Like a lamb that is lead to the slaughter,
And like a ewe that is dumb before its shearers. . . .
For he was cut off from the land of the living . . .
And his grave was assigned among the wicked.
A righteous one, My servant, shall make many righteous
And their iniquities he shall bear.

And so this bread, which is, Jesus said, now 'my body', is especially to be considered as the body that will suffer for others, that will save others, and that was, as we know, to be sacrificed for others the next day.

Jesus' words over the wine were probably these:

This is the chalice, the New Covenant in my blood.

In these words, also, was contained enormous meaning. We have already noticed how the old Covenant was the ground, the origin, of Israel's privilege of being under God's special care. From it came her special relationship with God. Her whole way of life was founded on it. Now, Jesus was saying, in my blood (which meant 'through my death') a new Covenant is replacing

the old. God's bestowal of his special favour is being set in a fuller and a broader key. This chalice—or, rather, its contents—is this new Covenant, which comes about through my death. This new Covenant had been promised by Jeremiah centuries before:

A time is coming, the Lord says, when I mean to ratify a new Covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Juda. It will not be like the Covenant which I made with their fathers, on the day when I took them by the hand, to rescue them from Egypt; that they should break my Covenant, and I, their Lord, should abandon them. No, this is the Covenant I will grant the people of Israel, the Lord says, when that time comes. I will implant my law in their innermost hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The forging of it had been attributed to that same Servant who, as we have seen, was to surrender himself for others:

I will . . . appoint thee for the Covenant of the people,
For the light of the nations.
I will preserve thee and appoint thee for the Covenant of
the people,
To restore the land,
To allot the inheritances that were made desolate;
To say to the prisoners: come forth!
And to them that are in darkness: Be enlightened!

And this moment, as he passed the cup to his disciples, the Servant was speaking of the fuller Age that he was about to introduce.

And so in these formulas Jesus made known not only that somehow he became present in the bread and wine which must be food for his disciples, but that he was in them especially as the Servant who suffered for others; as the Servant, moreover, who made possible to man a deeper intimacy with God in a fuller Age; and as he who expressed his wonder and gratitude for God's nature by offering his very life blood as a sacrifice, thereby sealing the Covenant, and thus immeasurably enlarging the horizons of all men who would see.

All this was contained in the few words Jesus spoke as he told them that, just as God's power had gripped a human nature and made it his own, so this power took to itself now another material means by which to be present among them. Only he was present in no inactive way, but as the Servant who died for his people, bringing them thereby a new Covenant, a new Age, a fuller friendship and access to God. And this mention of 'my blood', although it signified primarily his death, must have been meant to remind them of the blood shed in the sacrifice of the Old Covenant, so that they would be able to see, all the more clearly, Jesus especially as sacrificed in the bread and wine before them.

That supper-party talked far into the night, and what Jesus said in the course of it completed the Apostles' half-understood introduction to what the world was to look like.

Here we have a sight of Jesus most himself. The snarling jealousy of the Pharisees, and the self-centred interest of the crowd, are silent. Jesus is alone with his family; he is at home, can speak without caution, speak from his heart. And he does, for he has much to say. Little as they realise it now, this family gathering is the last. And what a shattering disillusionment for them it is likely to be! Him gone, him defeated, whom they have been standing by so patiently these two years and more, until he should give them the word for the Kingdom really to come into full force.

'You must not be distressed: just as you have confidence in God, so have confidence in me too.' He was going to the Father to prepare a home for them, 'and then I will take you where I live, so that you may be where I am, and you know the way to where I am going.'

Thomas interrupted to say that they didn't know his destination, so how could they know the way. In reply Jesus told him that if there was one thing that knowing him so intimately and so long should have taught them—the whole purpose of his teaching and behaviour—it was that the Father's power was fully manifest in him, that his whole living was to reflect, and to lead to the Father.

But the consolation of being with him again in an undetermined future was to be supplemented. In the meantime:

If you have any love for me, you must keep my commandments
which I give you

And then I will ask the Father,
and he will give you another to befriend you,
one who is to dwell continually with you for ever.

It is the truth-giving Spirit,
for whom the world can find no room,
because it cannot see him,
cannot recognize him.

But you are to recognize him;
he will be continually at your side,
nay, he will be in you.

He who is to befriend you, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send on my account,
will in his turn make everything plain,
and recall to your minds everything I have said to you.

He was speaking of a new power, one who would introduce them more completely into his and the Father's world, if only, unlike those who would not follow him, they fitted themselves for that world by obeying his directions for their good:

When that day comes,
you will learn for yourselves that I am in the Father,
and you are in me,
and I am in you.

If a man has any love for me,
he will be true to my word;
and then he will win my Father's love,
and we will both come to him,
and make our continual abode with him.

The Spirit was to be their strength, their corroboration in the companionship with the Father and the Son, enabling them to recognise something of the new world he had been trying to open up to them.

When the truth-giving Spirit, who proceeds from the Father
has come to befriend you,
he whom I will send to you from the Father's side,
he will bear witness of what I was;
and you too are to be my witnesses,
you who from the first have been in my company.

Now, I am going back to him who sent me.

None of you is asking me, Where is it you are going?
so full are your hearts with sorrow at my telling you this.

And yet I can say truly that it is better for you I should go away;

He who is to befriend you will not come to you unless I do go,
but if only I make my way there, I will send him to you.

I have still much to say to you, but it is beyond your reach as yet.

It will be for him, the truth-giving Spirit, when he comes,
to guide you into all truth.

He will not utter a message of his own;

he will utter a message that has been given to him;

and he will make plain to you what is still to come.

And he will bring me honour,

because it is from me that he will derive what he makes plain to
you.

I say that he will derive from me what he makes plain to you,

because all that belongs to the Father belongs to me.

III

THE PLAN IS FULFILLED

PART I. BASIC EVENTS

THE event of the Last Supper was followed by the death on Calvary and the appearances of Christ to many of his close friends. What significance had these events for the early Christians? The events were not haphazard: they were actions of God expressing himself in a way men, and in the first instance these Jews, would understand. To discover their full meaning, therefore, we must look at the events from the early Christian point of view.

1. *The Last Supper and the post-Resurrection meals with Jesus.* The Jews had been promised a New Age when all would be happiness and when everyone would live in God's country as his special guests sharing in his power. As we know, the precise shape of this happiness had not been, in fact could not be, described directly: only at second remove, by means of metaphors. One of these metaphors had been that of a meal with God or the Messiah. A suitable and expressive metaphor, because a meal was one of the most vivid ways the Jews had of expressing intimacy—in this case intimacy with God or the Messiah, of being taken into their family when one of them came to rule at the end.

At the Last Supper, Jesus had made plain, particularly by his there making the New Covenant and thus introducing the New Age, that that Supper was the meal with the Messiah, that the meal was the New Age actually being rendered present. It was

made present there through signs: that is through words and gestures, and so not manifestly. But the New Age, albeit in this hidden way, was there; and this certainty was made more absolute and meaningful after the Resurrection when this meal was re-enacted at the early Eucharists.

For after the Resurrection Jesus appeared to many of his followers, and he appeared to them mainly at these meals. Both these facts are of central importance for the understanding of Christianity, and we would do well to fix our attention on each of them in turn.

2. *Christ's appearance to his followers in a new form of human life.* After the Resurrection many Christians saw, as a few had seen at the Transfiguration, Jesus living in a form of human life that was too full for description in terms of our ordinary human experience. The word they used to describe this was the strongest they had. Before coming to it we had better see what were the events they had already applied it to.

These events were the 'appearances' of God to some of them in Old Testament times. How closely those few had met him we cannot know. All we are told is that in some way, once or twice, the unfathomable power and majesty of God himself had been known by men. It was the biggest experience a man could have, for in it he touched a life of a radiance and dimension immeasurably beyond his ken. It frightened and overpowered him like a shock. But in it he saw all that is fine and great, boundlessly and serenely lived.

What these men experienced of God was called God's 'glory'. The word meant God himself in manifest form. It denoted God's own life, especially as seen by men. And this was the word that the people who saw Jesus after his Resurrection felt bound to use in order to describe the new kind of life they saw him now possessing. He was still human—very much so. But they found him to be living a human life with an activity and brilliance that betokened in him the personal presence of God.

Christianity is quite incomprehensible unless seen as stemming

from this experience. What the early Christians saw was a condition of life in a human being that was God-like. Superlatives and highflown language will not help us to bring out the meaning of that sentence. It is simply a question of weighing the words used.

Once this is done, the impact of this experience, and the two thousand years of historical events that have flowed from it, can be a little understood. There was a new way of living: that is what it amounted to. Even before the Death and Resurrection these men had been deeply impressed and attracted by Jesus' way of living: that calm, that sureness of purpose, the love for men. There had always been something massive, even in his deepest personal love, about him. All this was still there. He was still entirely the Jesus they knew. But now there was a range, and power, and freedom from constriction, about all his qualities. That kind of life none of their former experiences could have hinted at as possible. They were conscious that even now they comprehended only the surface of it.

Yet it was not something simply to be wondered at. It was destined for *them*. There could not possibly be a greater joy for a human than that. One looked at one's life and saw that it had completely changed its quality. Those boundaries that fenced it in from so many angles had gone. Death had become, not the end, but an incident. In itself, death is a dreadful thing: it was no longer so. A concrete, experienced, not merely speculative, assurance of survival after death—and we all have to face the fact of death sooner or later—is well worth the having. Jesus, as he had foretold them, had simply tossed the all-quenching clutch of death away. But there are different kinds of survival. It was the kind of survival promised that was the point of Christianity and the kernel of the Apostles' message. The survival in question here was not that wan sort of existence that those, say, of the Greeks who believed in an after-life, at all had hope of. It was not a sort of ghost-like lingering on. Nor was it song and trumpets, although, as with any Oriental people, such ideas did help to remind them of its richness. It was a life lived, eternally, with

solidly human powers; only these now 'went' as they could never have been suspected to be capable of 'going' before. An intimacy with, and an enlivening by God himself, which even their very imperfect experience of it in Jesus revealed as the summit of human happiness.

It is no exaggeration whatsoever to say that the experience these hard-headed Jews had of Jesus in this condition of life they described by the word meaning God-like ('glory') and their knowledge that this condition of life, whose full radiance they could not yet know, had been gained and introduced to their world that *they* might attain to it, *is* Christianity. No part of Christianity has any significance at all except as a practical response to this opportunity. Christ had come only to offer men an opportunity of living like that: as human beings full of the power and presence of God possessing this indestructible, close friendship with God's family, which comes to its full flower after we have proved ourselves, but which we already possess. Already we have within us the seeds of this eternal life.

3. *Christ appeared thus mainly at meals.* This is the second fundamental point we wanted to make in this enquiry as to how the chief, founding events of Christianity looked to the early Christians. To set it in right focus, we first make a few preliminary remarks.

Christ's object had been to win for us a fuller kind of existence. Proof of it, and some inkling of its dimensions, he gave to the early Christians by these appearances of his. And they occurred chiefly at meals where Christians were obeying his command that they should repeat the Last Supper.

He had told them to repeat it by an unmistakable order: 'Do this', he had said, 'in my commemoration.' The Aramaic word for 'do' meant to perform a religious ceremony: in other words, it was the religious ceremony (i.e. the actions effected, hiddenly, by words and signs) that he had just enacted in the Upper Room that they, in their turn, were to perform.

And these ceremonies of re-enactment, like the Last Supper

itself, were to be 'commemorations'. The Jewish Paschal meal, on which the Last Supper had been modelled, was itself a, commemoration': that is to say, its function was to make actual again the world-changing, saving deeds of God, assuring the participants in the ceremony of God's effectiveness for them in the past, his care for them in the present, and his determination to win a great future for them ultimately. Now the ceremony the Apostles were commanded to perform again was to be in *Jesus'* commemoration: to commemorate, that is, Jesus' saving deeds, and so particularly his death and resurrection. They were to make vitally present what Jesus had done.

It was in this ceremony, of such enormous content, that Jesus would sometimes show himself visibly living his new form of life. And they knew that this standard of living had been won for *them* and was already hiddenly possessed by them. But it was possessed, as these appearances helped to show, particularly at these meals. These meals were repetitions, re-enactments, of the Messianic meal, that had first taken place at the Last Supper. Hence they were the New Age actually, though for them still hiddenly, realised. We must be quite clear that we grasp one thing. The New Age, which was realised either hiddenly, or with Jesus more or less openly, at these messianic meals particularly, was the final achievement of human destiny in a very real sense. Basically, there was nothing more to be won or longingly looked forward to. All that could possibly be achieved had been achieved. The New Age, God's final promise, was actually here.

This fact of arrival altered, radically, a man's situation in time. Formerly, the Jews had rightly divided time into two. There had been the time before and the time after the inception of the New Age. For them, therefore, complete and assured happiness had belonged to the future, and must be anxiously, eagerly, awaited. With these messianic meals, promised for the New Age, such a standpoint in time had vanished. To borrow a recent writer's image, we may compare the position with that in a war where the decisive battle has been won and ultimate victory thus assured, so that all that remains is to work out its inevitable consequences

over a shorter or longer period. As Saint John wrote in his first epistle in this connexion, 'Little children, it is the last hour.'

There can be no wonder, therefore, that the characteristic of these messianic meals, these Eucharists as they were called after their central prayer, was joy. It was the joy of secure achievement.

The significance of these appearances at meals is still further underlined if we take into consideration the chief, and immensely significant title by which the early Christians spoke of Christ. The test of whether or not a man was a Christian in the early Church was whether he would say 'Jesus is the Kyrios.'

The Roman Emperors were accredited with the title. It signified that they were divine and all-powerful. The Christians of the early centuries, often at the cost of their lives, asserted that Jesus, and not the Emperor, could make those claims.

If we will assume for a moment the rich imagination of an Oriental we shall understand better the picturesque but meaningful idea they had of this title as applied to Christ.

The world was pictured by them as consisting of three tiers. Above all was God. Then came those whose nature did not demand a body—spirits, as we call them—both good and evil. Thirdly man. The evil spirits could exert power over man (they had superior faculties) and were a barrier between him and God. In the context of this picture (no one pretended it was scientifically accurate—it was just the way in which Orientals were apt to think) the early Christians' understanding of Christ went that he, by his Resurrection had won through to the highest region where God sat on his throne. Even that last expression had deep meaning in Oriental thought. When you said 'God sits on his throne' you were saying that he was exercising supreme rule. And the expression that 'Christ is sitting at the right hand of God' was not concerned to tell you which side of a dais Christ was allotted, but that he had won through to a share in that rule. Christ, therefore, had not only made a way through the powers of evil, but now enjoyed absolute rule over them and all things. And the point was that a *man* had done this: one man on behalf of all men. All men were to share the same access to God, the same

freedom from the permanent defeat by evil, and the same power—all men who kept to Christ. This universal rule of Christ, and our sharing in it, was the conviction, pictured in Oriental imagery, that gave rise to his being called 'Kyrios'. And this conviction was the very test of Christianity.

Now the title 'Kyrios' was one that, for a Jew, belonged especially to divine worship. It was the Greek equivalent for 'Adonai', the word the Jews used for God himself in their services. And the Christians applied this divine title to Christ because, chiefly in their worship, at these post-Resurrection messianic meals, they had seen him as one equipped with divine life.

4. *How these things had been achieved.* In the first three sections we have seen that the new situation introduced by the Last Supper and the events following it was a new sort of life that was a sharing of Christ's life, an eternal life with God, possessed fully but still hiddenly; and we have seen that the re-enactments of the Last Supper, the Eucharists, were the occasions when the sharing and intimacy with the victorious, divine Christ (the 'Kyrios') were particularly realised. This was the Christian achievement. And our purpose in this section is to see how it was achieved. The next section will take a last look, this time through the eyes of St Paul, at the central fact itself. Lastly, we shall underline its motive.

By his death Christ sacrificed himself to God. We have seen what sacrifice means: it is the putting of a human being (in this case) completely into the possession and power of God: the solemn and effective acknowledgement of God's sovereignty over the person. Christ, in his death, acted on behalf of all men, on behalf of the human race as an entirety. The race had been forcibly wrenched from God's full friendship by the Fall. It couldn't, in its fallen state, be fully possessed by him, and so was inevitably deprived of the benefits he wished to confer on it. Christ, on its behalf, by his death, abolished that gulf between man and God.

But how had these benefits, or rather that benefit (this sharing in Christ's life) been bestowed on Christians? An early Christian

would have answered that it had come about by the sending of the power or 'Spirit' of God upon them. Jesus had said at his last meal that those who were true to him would live as he did when he had gone to the Father, and that this would happen through the Spirit. The Spirit would be the force that would enliven them.

Hence it is obviously of vital importance for us to understand what was meant by this expression, 'The Spirit' or 'The Spirit of God.' It was an expression, as we remember, that was perfectly familiar to the Jews. As we saw in a previous chapter, if God exerted his power in a man to a special degree the event was described as the Spirit, that is the effectiveness of God, being laid on that man. And since God was particularly considered as one who acted—as the all-powerful, the possession of his Spirit meant not only the presence of God's power, but also the presence of God himself, in a man.

We have also seen that for centuries before Jesus it had been promised that one day the Spirit would come to man fully. God would exert his full power in man, come with all the effectiveness of his personality.

That was the background to the event we must now try to describe. Peter and the rest were in some house. It was the Jewish feast of Pentecost. And, whether by acting on natural forces or in their imaginations, God conveyed to them that he, or the Spirit of God, had come into their very midst; for majestic phenomena of nature, such as a great wind and fire, were thought of by the Jews as being the accompaniments of a special coming of God. That is what the description in the *Acts of Apostles* of such phenomena means. The Spirit of God became with them as they sat in that room together.

The description goes on to say that 'they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak strange languages, as the Spirit gave utterance to each.' Here was a sign that a more than human force was in them, a guarantee that these men were not impostors. We shall see the effect this guarantee had in a moment. But we should remark that the radical disunity in the human race had come to an end. The disunity was held to have begun with the

rise of different languages pictured as happening at Babel. Now there was to be no essential division between those favoured by God, the Chosen People, and the rest. And the historical proof of this was to be that these men had been given a mission, not merely to the Jews, but to the whole world. The full, universal plan of God was now in force.

News of these men's new power of language spread in the neighbourhood, indeed throughout the city. Some were astonished or perplexed. Some thought it a good butt for their wit: 'They have had their fill of wine.' But Peter, like the rest a changed man—from Jesus' death they had all been hiding in much fear lest it should be their turn next—at once took charge of the situation:

Men of Judaea, and all you who are dwelling in Jerusalem,
I must tell you this; listen to what I have to say
These men are not drunk, as you suppose;
it is only the third hour of the day.

Having brushed aside their ribaldry, he came to explanation. This event, he said, was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that in the New Age the Spirit would visit all mankind.

This is what was foretold by the prophet Joel:
In the last times, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all mankind,
and your sons and daughters will be prophets,
your old men shall see visions, and your young men too,
and I will pour out my Spirit in those days. . . .
I will shew wonders in heaven,
and on earth blood, and fire, and whirling smoke.
The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood
Before the day of the Lord comes, the great, the terrible day.

His audience knew that these portents stood for the personal coming of God. And now Peter went on to tell them the story and purpose of Jesus' life. And so impressive was his speech and its evidence that three thousand asked for Baptism. For Peter spoke not only with the witness of these special interferences

of God's power, but also, in such contrast with previously, with confidence and a full grasp of the working out of the plan of which these events were the fulfilment. And these three thousand too, were visited by God's help of understanding and change of heart.

This day, as had been foretold, was the beginning of God's *universal* adoption of man. This coming of the Spirit was the birthday of the new People of God. And we have seen that this meant an organised society to benefit by a Covenant which went by the name of 'the Church of God.' A new Church with a new Covenant was built on Peter. And Peter, though sometimes foolish—as Paul once openly told him—was showing himself a different man: instead of being timid and at a loss as to what was happening, he had, through the coming of the Spirit, become authoritative and certain what was true. In the history of this new Church that the *Acts of the Apostles* goes on to relate, the Spirit is constantly referred to as showing his presence in it in granting special gifts, in guiding the Church in its teaching and government, and in giving it the forgiveness of sins. In other words, the Spirit was the life force of God's new People, as it had been foretold he would be. He endowed them with the vitality, truth, and wisdom of God.

The Spirit, then, was God with them, active in them in this new, invigorating, close and practical way. Again, it was simply a matter of evidence. They had seen the phenomena at Pentecost: the wind and fire outwardly or in their imaginations; the extraordinary power of languages; the healing and prophecy that some of them were enabled to perform; and the Apostles' sudden change from timid fugitives to bold leaders.

Those were the facts. God with them. They spoke of this as the coming upon them of the Spirit of God. And the facts were all that really interested them. For practical purposes it was all that mattered. The question we are going to raise now would have seemed to them almost a trivial one. Consequently, if we want to see things in the perspective in which they saw them we should not forget that it is far less central than what has been said previously in this section.

The question we are raising now is probably the one that we would begin by asking if we had an early Christian before us to speak on the Holy Spirit. We might say to him: 'In the Old Testament the Spirit was not thought of as a distinct person from the Father: when did it dawn on you that he is?'

The difficulty is that even if you were a skilful lawyer accustomed to deft cross-examination you would need to use all your ingenuity to make the early Christian begin to understand what a 'person' was. We, today, think of *a person* (who does things). The Jews thought of (a person) *who does things*. The emphasis, we see, was entirely different. With the Jews, as has been remarked in another connexion, a man was regarded more for what he did than for what he was, more as a performer of actions than as a person. Consequently it would have been extremely difficult, and perhaps impossible, for even your skilful lawyer to have made the early Christian understand what he was getting at.

But if you let him get down from the witness box and talked with him about it quietly for a time, it would begin to occur to you that, although you thought about it from different angles, what you both saw was the same thing. He would tell you that Christians were baptised, as Christ had commanded, 'in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' The Father and the Son, he knew, were distinct persons, though he had never given much thought to this distinction because what seemed to matter to him was that they acted together, the Father through the Son, rather than that they were distinct: for he was not given to mere speculations, but, like any Jew, to looking at events in a practical manner. Well then, now he had come to think of it, no doubt the Father and the Son were distinct. And if they, of course the Spirit also. Yes, and Christ had spoken of him as one would a distinct person, at the Last Supper.

Yet all this would have seemed to the early Christian perfectly true, but, at the same time, rather an academic question. What was going on now was not a distinction but action. The event of his and his friends' lives was that the Father was acting in them, befriending them, so greatly, through Christ and the Spirit. The

Father was drawing all men to his intimate companionship through Christ, in the power, under the guidance and help and inspiration, of the Spirit. That was the gladdening fact.

5. *Christ's fundamental achievement from another viewpoint.* In our attempt to see the new Christian fact through the Apostles' eyes, trying to understand their view of it, we have considered first the experience they had had of Christ's new life, on which it centred; and then of how this new closeness to God, which was for them as well as Christ, had been won by his sacrifice and implemented in them by his sending of the Spirit. To this achievement of Christ, its motive gave its special beauty. But before considering it, we are going to devote a section to a closer look at how Christ's new life is shared by Christians. This can be done by taking two occasions on which St Paul spoke of it. His cast of thought may be unfamiliar, and therefore initially difficult. But the depth of St Paul's insight may persuade the reader that the effort necessary to understand him is worthwhile.

In St Paul's business letters—for that is what they were—he answers problems sent in to him, or attempts to put right abuses in practice or preaching in his missionary outposts. In them he did not set out to teach the Christian truth. He took it as already known. But that truth was a vital one; it was the main-spring, the yard-stick, of right action. And so it forms the constant background of the letters, providing the criterion by which the problems must be settled. If we 'play back' parts of those letters we shall see the basic Christian hope reflected in his answers as it was then understood.

On one occasion, Paul is correcting a false notion of a truth. Human sin had been great, but God's favour, shown through Christ, had been greater still. Every Christian knew this. And St Paul had been recalling something of the results of that favour before the paragraph we are taking. It seemed like a mathematical formula: the greater the sin, the greater the grace. And this seemed to point to the convenient moral: stick to sin. It probably appears to us a rather naïve conclusion, to say the least; and no

doubt there was a good deal of wishful thinking in it. But it seems that the problem was a serious one for Paul's correspondents. And he sets it down at the top of the paragraph: 'Does it follow that we ought to go on sinning in order to give still more occasion for grace?'

He rushes into his answer with a characteristic impetuosity which can make us miss seeing the foundation of the whole Christian message which he just mentions in passing as a thing everybody knows. 'You know well enough that we who were taken up into Christ by Baptism. . . .' and then the sentence speeds on to its climax. But let us stop before the climax for the moment, for we already have the foundation on which all the rest is built. What happens to a man when he becomes a Christian—in Baptism, therefore—is that he is 'taken up into Christ', or, as he put it in another letter, 'All you who have been baptised in Christ's name have put on the person of Christ.' What exactly did he mean?

St Paul is thinking here in a Jewish way. The Jews, like the Scots today, were clannish in the best sense. A family, with all its ramifications of second cousins and great-grandfathers, was for them a definite unity. And what they saw with particular clarity was that most of the subsequent history of the family depends on the man who founds it. Perhaps they attached too much importance to him; but he certainly is important especially in agricultural and tribal communities. One reads of at least one Scottish family where the founder made a lucky marriage with the daughter of a landowner who went off to the crusades; the crusader didn't return; and so the family was founded in circumstances of relative affluence which set its seal on the destinies of perhaps thirty generations. At any rate, exaggerated or not, the Jews did see the founder of a clan as more or less containing in himself all subsequent generations and determining their future, while the generations themselves were thought of as fulfilling his destiny. And this was the 'figure of thought', if you will, in which Paul and his readers were accustomed to think and in which they expressed the truth revealed to them. Christ was like Adam,

he was the founder of a family. What he did, he did in the name of all, as the representative of all. And his deeds were shared by all his 'descendants' by the very fact of their being members of his family. You became a member of Christ's family in Baptism.

So we see that it was not a kind of static, statuesque Christ with whom the Christian had fellowship, but a supremely dynamic person: one who accomplished great things. Hence those who were taken up into Christ by Baptism.

have been taken up, all of us, into his death . . .
so that (the purpose behind it) just as Christ was
raised up by his Father's power from the dead
we too might live and move in a new kind of existence.

Success completely depended, therefore, on whether one actually did advance from the state of sharing his death with him to sharing his resurrection also. On this foundation Paul builds his conclusion:

If we have died with Christ, we have faith to believe
that we shall share his life.
We know that Christ, now he has risen from the dead,
cannot die any more;
death has no more power over him;
the death he died was a death, once for all, to sin.
The life he now lives is a life that looks towards God.
And you, too, must think of yourselves as dead to sin
and alive with a life that looks towards God,
through Christ our Lord.

By Baptism you were made a part of Christ's family; you had a share in his deeds and the life he had won by them. If you lived up to it, if you proved yourself to be 'alive with a life that looks towards God', then you would automatically become like him, openly and fully, later.

So we see that the outline of the Christian faith was very simple. Christ had shown himself to have everything a human being could wish for. That was the first stage, which, for many early Christians, was simply a matter of first-hand experience.

They had seen him like that. The second stage, which we have just seen St Paul considering, was that we could become like Christ, that we could win through to the same sort of life. We have seen St Paul expressing it: clearly, if you remember the clan idiom he was using. He didn't explain it fully. You cannot. How such a thing can come about, Christ did not explain. Human understanding is too limited to take in so big a thing. What mattered was that it did come about, if you would follow him. That it could happen, they saw each time they met him after his Resurrection. Those meetings, we see, were the proof, the very cornerstone, of the Christian hope.

This second of the two basic stages, as we have called them, of Christianity is so important that we may feel it worthwhile to watch St Paul expressing the same thing in another, and probably deeper, way.

Here he was averting what may have been an even more dangerous mistake, this time of his charges in the Colossus neighbourhood. We shall have to remember that Paul was dealing with definite people in a definite locality. In fact these Colossians were fairly typical middle-class citizens of those times. For, strange as it may seem to us, the popular craze then was not for football but for philosophy. Naturally it wasn't a very profound philosophy; more a question of talking it than thinking it—like a young man who dips into the *Financial Times* and tries to impress by talking big business. At any rate, it was the sort of thing you talked about to the barber as he cut your hair. Airy speculations have always rather appealed to the Eastern mind. A shallow intellectualism which despised the body and went in for ascetic practices gave them the illusion of being philosophers, an intellectual *élite*.

Nevertheless, the Colossians were probably quite sincere. They had linked the Greek outlook and practice with some Jewish practices as well, and they deliberately neglected the comfort and needs of their bodies because they were convinced that this would unhamper their minds in their search for God; and that was all that mattered for them.

Paul told them that they were making fools of themselves. On the one hand they were making themselves out to be Christians, while on the other they linked themselves to a way of life Christ had abolished and superseded. In other words, they were contradicting themselves. These practices, and this general outlook of theirs, are ones that belonged to the old dispensation, when it was, in the popular language, the angels who were the intermediaries in giving the Covenant and who were God's Managing Directors for the government of the world. Those practices and beliefs, Paul is saying, only make sense in the circumstances of the Old Covenant and presuppose it as still in force. But how on earth can you believe that the old and new Covenants are in force simultaneously? The whole point of the new is to stand in place of the old. The way that formerly gave you a cramped and incomplete access to God is simply no longer there. Its time of usefulness has passed away. Nowadays, there is only one access to God, and a full one: Christ. So,

don't let anyone carry you off as a slave of the
speculation and profitless deceit taught us by
mere men (according to which the old order would
still be in force)
and not of the teaching of Christ.

Why?

because it is in *him* that the whole fulness of the
power and life of God dwells in a bodily manner
and in *him* you have a part in that very same fulness
for in him you were (made a member of God's
chosen people through Baptism).

Then, having shown how pointless in these circumstances it would be to take up again with the old order, he continues on the subject of Baptism:

You, by baptism, have been united with his burial
(i.e. with his death),

united, too, with his resurrection,
 through your faith in that exercise of power
 by which God raised him from the dead,
 For, when you lay dead in your sins, he endowed
 you with the self-same life as he gave Christ.
 Risen, then, with Christ, you must lift your
 thoughts above,
 where Christ now sits at the right hand of God.
 You must be heavenly-minded, not earthly-minded;
 You have undergone death, and your life is hidden
 away now with Christ in God.
 Christ is your life,
 and when he is made manifest, you too will be made
 manifest in glory with him.

We see that the third quotation adds nothing essential to the second. It only describes its realisation. *The* fact for a human being is that 'you have a part in that same fulness': 'the fulness of the power and life of God' which dwells in Christ 'in a bodily manner'. As yet it is hidden, as Christ's was before his Resurrection. No matter. For 'Christ is your life, and when he is made manifest, you too will be made manifest in glory with him.'

4. *The Motive.* Mankind, which had previously been estranged from God's full favour by sin, had entered into his fullest possible favour and intimacy. This had come about because the Son of God had undertaken to live and die for men. It is easy for us to underestimate how deeply Jesus' followers felt this. They had, as we have not, a first-hand knowledge of Jesus, and through him of God: the only prolonged first-hand experience of God man has ever been permitted. They had seen and felt how God behaved in their surroundings and circumstances, and what he made of other men and work and fatigue and friendship and God and death. That is just what we read about in the Gospels.

Far more than this, though, he had died like them and for them. His death, and the triumph it won for him, had earned for them that new life of his of which this chapter has spoken, earned for them the most satisfying possession a man can receive.

Christ died for us all
so that being alive should no longer mean living with
our own life
but with his life who died for us and has risen again.

The explanation, the key, to this whole enterprise of God's that began in the Creation and came to its full effect on the Cross, was selfless love. If you come across something that fascinates and delights you: a book, a place, a game, a person; you want the people you really care for to share your pleasure. That was God's motive too. He wanted to share his pleasure with everyone he really cared for. That meant all the men he himself had created. The pleasure to be shared was his own life.

This was to happen, as we have seen, by our becoming like Jesus. Jesus as God and man earned for his humanity that sharing in God's life by completely offering himself into the possession of God by sacrifice: by showing his Father that he loved him and so much wanted all that he had to be under the Father's rule that he put his human life into the Father's hands: 'Father, into your hands I commend my own life' ('spirit' there meant 'life'). Jesus put his whole self under the power and influence of God so that he, and those who would agree to become like him, should be that close to God: filled with his presence, his life, his delightful company and activity. He won this through his death, or, as St Paul would put it, 'through his blood': through that deliberate act of his by which he allowed life to be sundered from him:

It was God's good pleasure to let all completeness dwell in him,
and through him to win back all things, whether on earth
or in heaven,
into union with himself,
making peace with them through his blood, shed on the cross.

Our trouble is that we hopelessly underestimate the force and the profound, realistic motive for Jesus' love of the Father and us. Love for the Father, open-eyed and absolute, was the motive of Jesus' life. He knew that the Father was the one person who could satisfy him, who was fully lovable and desirable. His whole delight was to do that will of his which was so lovable.

That will was his plan. A direction of everything that exists in a great and beautiful harmony, so that ordinary men and women should enjoy to the full all that is worthwhile. That was what Jesus loved. It was so perfect an expression of his Father, so characteristic of him, this design for mankind's happiness, so unnecessary, so spontaneous, so uncalled for. An all-embracing masterpiece where, like a symphony, each instrument had its place in the achievement of a sublime result.

Love, therefore, brought Jesus to the Father. Love expressed, put into action, in his death of surrendering himself to his Father on the Cross, earned for him, as man, his Father's sort of life. A sacrifice of intense love, excruciatingly painful but deliberate and clear-sighted, was the action that won a future of unlimited happiness for us all.

Such was the meaning of Jesus' death, with the triumph that inevitably followed it. It opened the door to the future. Our true well-being only comes through and because of it.

Conclusion. Jesus' life-work has now been considered. Sketchily and inadequately, certainly; and only personal reflection, particularly on the Gospels, can make it come vividly upon us. But the value of a summary is that it does enable us to see the main stages of a development. And Jesus' work was a development. His becoming God and man brought a completely new reality and possibility into human nature. It raised man to a new level. It was his basic work, for he had lifted man to life with God: his own humanity first, and men, if they would follow him, as a result.

This work came to full effect, for him and us, in his death and rising from the dead. And his sending of the Holy Spirit upon his new People was its actual beginning through God's coming, in person, among us. Those deeds of a person men had met gave the fellowship that St John speaks of:

Our message concerns that Word, who is life;
what he was from the first,

what we have heard about him,
what our own eyes have seen of him;
what it was that met our gaze, and the touch of our hands.
Yes, life dawned;
and it is as eyewitnesses that we give you news of that life,
that eternal life,
which ever abode with the Father
and has dawned, now, on us.
This message about what we have seen and heard we pass on
to you,
so that you too may share in our fellowship.
What is it, this fellowship of ours?
Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Those deeds, of Incarnation, Death, Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, that bring this fellowship, were to be made present, effective realities in us. They were not to be mere historical events like the death of Caesar. God's actions are above the restriction of time. Jesus' actions are with us in the Last Suppers we celebrate.

This chapter must finish, therefore, with the Eucharist. Not as a separate matter, but as the natural continuation of the historical sequence we have been following. God's plan is still at work. Its actions are chiefly those all-effective ones of Jesus. God's plan for the present moment is that, sharing in the Eucharist in Jesus' actions, we shall have that fellowship with him, so that through him we shall have access to the Father.

PART 2. FULFILLED NOW

The Eucharist. If you buy a horse you treat it according to its own quality and nature. If it is bred a carthorse, you would be merely squandering your money if you entered it for the Derby; if a thoroughbred racehorse, you would be wasting it to put it to the cart or plough.

God had bought, or in fact created, human beings. Men, like horses, have a distinct nature and way of acting. God, like the

reasonable horse purchaser, treated men as they were made. He, after all, had chosen to make them what they are.

All this sounds too obvious to be worth saying. And yet this obvious truth explains man's story. The destination of that story was God's design of bestowing his own scope of life on man. But in doing so, God treated man as man.

That is why you had that centuries-long nurturing of a true knowledge of God through the medium of a fixed society, the People of God. For man, by his nature, develops in time and lives in society. That is why God took to himself a human nature and became man, so that all men, being made like the Son through Baptism, might remain as truly man as he was, and at the same time be as truly with God as he. And that is why, finally, we are being led to God at present in a hidden, almost obscure, way; because if we had a clear sight of the three Persons who are sharing their life with us we would have no alternative but to choose that life. The attraction of God seen clearly would be irresistible. We should be helpless before it, no room being left for the deliberate choice of our wills. We are men, not automats, and as such have the right to work out our own destiny.

But this is not to say that we have no direct contact with God. Jesus deliberately left us means of remaining in touch with him, the chief of which was the repetition of his last supper, that ceremony which effected so much. Its language was signs: words and gestures and material things. Those were its means of expression and of action. Jesus consecrated the bread and wine through words, and those material things were the vehicles of his presence. In the Eucharistic prayer, as we shall see better in a moment, his great actions were made present by his intention expressed and put into force through words. Just as at Bethlehem God had become present with men by means of a human nature, so now by means of human and material things. It was the same pattern of action, the Incarnational pattern of action.

And so through these signs God came to man and made him like himself (sanctified him); and man, in his turn, spoke to God through them. There was another way of being close to God:

through living one's normal life for him. But this way through signs and ceremonies was always recognised to be immeasurably the most fruitful and the most direct. Here God was met at his most effective, providing the enlivening force which would impart vigour and value to the other actions of our lives.

Jesus had said 'Do this as a commemoration of me.' We may find it useful to begin by seeing what sort of ceremony it was by which these early Christians fulfilled this command, so that, with this before us, it will be clearer what they understood as happening there. An account written not much more than a hundred years after Christ runs as follows:

SUNDAY GATHERING.	And on that day which is called after the sun, all who are in the towns and in the country gather together for a communal celebration.
SCRIPTURE READINGS.	And then the memoirs of the Apostles (the gospels) or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as time permits.
SERMON.	After the reader has finished his task, the one presiding gives an address, urgently admonishing his hearers to practise these beautiful teachings in their lives.
PRAYERS.	Then all stand up and recite prayers.
BREAD AND WINE PREPARED.	After the end of the prayers . . . the bread and wine mixed with water are brought.
EUCCHARIST.	And the president offers up prayers and thanksgivings, as much as in him lies. The people chime in with an Amen.
COMMUNION.	Then takes place the distribution, to all attending, of the things over which the thanksgiving has been spoken, and the deacons bring a portion to the absent.
COLLECTION FOR THE NEEDY.	Besides, those who are well-to-do give whatever they will. What is gathered is deposited with the one presiding, who therewith helps orphans and widows.

Justin, writing about 165, is trying to allay rumours that shameful orgies occurred at Christian worship, rumours encouraged by the fact that non-Christians were rigidly excluded

from attending it. Justin's method of defence is simply to give a straightforward account of what actually took place.

We notice that one of the outstanding features of the ceremony he has described is its simplicity. Like any act of worship it is a close approach to God. Those attending are therefore reminded at the start of what sort of God they are meeting, which they can learn best by having recalled to them, in the Scripture Readings, what he has done. And since these acts of his have a fundamental bearing on their own present and future, the president underlines the lessons that these deeds of power and love, commemorated in the Scripture readings, should have for all. 'The Prayers' were a plea to God to exert his great goodness for the whole of this new family of his, the Church. And thus this preliminary part of the ceremony, borrowed and adapted from the Jewish synagogue, was concluded.

Now it was time that the action Christ had commanded to be repeated should be performed. When he himself had performed it, it had been set in a meal, and for some decades afterwards it had been joined to one; but since this was no longer the case, the bread and wine had to be prepared and brought up. This done, the president said the Eucharist, and all received a part of 'the things over which the Eucharist has been spoken.' Then there was the collection.

Justin says nothing about sacrifice or about bread and wine becoming a person, perhaps because he felt that it was not suitable for such things to be revealed to the unbeliever, and certainly because such a disclosure would have seemed to the prejudiced to give grounds for the widespread and sincerely believed allegations that human sacrifices were practised at the Christian secret gatherings. Nevertheless, this simple prayer of thanks contained the whole significance of this action. But before examining it, a glance should be given to the first statement Justin makes in his account that these gatherings took place 'on that day which is called after the sun'. It happened not to have been a casual selection of a day for the weekly meeting, but one which reflected a great deal of the early Christians' view of Christ.

For the Jews, of course, Saturday, the Sabbath, was the day devoted to God; but the Christians, twenty years after the death of Christ at the latest, had changed it to what the Jews called the first day of the week, Sunday.

It was no arbitrary choice, and we discover the reason when we notice the name the early Christians gave the day: they called it 'The Lord's day', that is 'The day of the Kyrios'. For example, a writing of about seventy years after Christ relates how 'we meet on the Lord's day, break bread and celebrate the Eucharist.'

Now we have already noticed the immense significance that the title Kyrios had as applied to Christ for the early Christians. It denoted his victory over death, his resurrection, and his winning of that new kind of life which some of them had seen him living, and it also denoted his imperial, divine power which he had chiefly shown forth in that event. It was to celebrate, to joyfully bring to mind, the triumph of their King, then, that the Christians met. It was this celebration which formed the climax of their week while the Jews had the Sabbath as theirs. It was only to make this central meaning of Sunday more explicit that it was later called expressly 'the day of the Resurrection', and it is still so called in Russia to this day.

Such was the frame of mind, therefore, in which the Christians 'kept' Sunday. It was for them a joyful re-enactment of what Christ had done for them, the event that gave the note of confident happiness that was the dominant one in their lives in the midst of whatever dangers. It helps us to measure the value they set on their gathering weekly for the Eucharist if we think of what those dangers usually were.

For more or less the first two hundred years of Christianity (actually between 65 and 260), attendance at Christian worship was a crime punishable by death. If caught—and the persistent hatred of the mob, and the awareness of the government that Christianity could only be exterminated by suppressing its worship, ensured that many were caught—the procedure was simple and quick. Culprits were brought before the magistrate, asked if they were Christians, and, unless they apostatised, either executed

within two or three hours or scourged and sent to a life-time of squalid misery (the 'life-time' seldom lasted more than two or three years) in the mines. Perhaps it is difficult for us to envisage a prospect of never being certain from one day to another that someone would not come and challenge you with the question 'Are you a Christian?'—whether as a jest, or out of malice, or merely because the accuser knew that, you dead, he would succeed to your job. Once the question was asked, nothing except apostasy could save you, for the questioner had the right to bring you before the magistrate, and the magistrate, however humane he might be, had no alternative but to sentence you to death or the mines. And the occasion when the danger of arrest was easily the greatest, especially in times of government persecution, was this weekly gathering for the Eucharist. A recent writer who gives an excellent picture of the situation of a Christian of those times, is led to this conclusion:

It was a burning faith in the vital importance of that Eucharistic *action* as such, its importance to God and to the Church and to a man's soul, for this world and for the next, which made the christians cling to the rite of the Eucharist against all odds. . . . These normal men and women were prepared with open eyes to accept the risks and inconveniences they undoubtedly did encounter, just to be present at the Eucharist together and regularly. . . . The christian came to the Eucharist . . . simply to *do* something, which he conceived he had an overwhelming personal duty to do, come what might. . . . What brought him was an intense belief that in the Eucharist action of the Body of Christ, as in no other way, he himself took a part in that act of sacrificial obedience to the will of God, which was consummated on Calvary and which had redeemed the world, including himself.

As the same writer points out, (and as we have already observed in reading Justin's account of just such an early Eucharist) there was nothing externally attractive about the ceremony. In fact the heart of it, the Eucharist prayer, which, with the distribution, was all that it essentially consisted of, hardly took more than five or ten minutes. We should remember, too, that the distribution

could take place at home. It was this prayer, then, on which Christianity was centred and on which ordinary men and women would endure a lifetime of insecurity to attend. We may naturally go on to ask what they saw in it to make them prize it so highly.

We saw in our account of Jesus' last supper that its climax was reached in a prayer of thanks, a Eucharist. It was an example of a man's most natural response to the fact of God, a spontaneous cry of admiration and joy at a person who was so great and so good. A matter-of-fact expression of this. God is a matter-of-fact person. He is practical. That power of his was not an image to which one put candles. It was used as the personal expression of his love for men.

Hence his actual deeds for men formed the theme of the prayer of gratitude. The Jew recollected the great benefits God had conferred on his race: the Rescue from Egypt, which had given it existence; the Covenant, which had made it God's People; being established in a rich land of their own; and his guidance of them towards the promised New Age in spite of their sometimes flagrant disloyalty. These proofs of God's love were not recounted as mere historical events, but as a recollection of what sort of Lord one was addressing: one who had loved his People so effectively and meant to do so still more effectively as soon as he could. In these 'commemorations' of God, as they were called, one thought of the sort of person God was, thought of him with exultant gratitude, and told him of one's love of him and one's hope for the future. With the Jews, the supreme hope was for the New Age when all would be well.

Jesus adopted these Eucharist prayers as the setting for the consecrations he spoke at either end of his last supper. Afterwards, the consecration prayers were prefaced by only one Eucharist prayer. The whole together was Jesus' 'commemoration' that he had commanded to be performed again. Together, they brought present *his* saving deeds, just as the old Eucharists had brought to mind—and even in a sense brought present—the Father's. More accurately, they brought *him* present, in his saving deeds: Jesus as the effective Kyrios. 'This is myself that will be

surrendered up for you'. 'This is the chalice, the New Covenant through my death'. That was the sort of presence Jesus had brought about for himself in the bread and wine at the Last Supper. By making himself in them so that he was rendered completely at the disposal of others—indeed for the eating of others—he had prefigured his sacrificial death with all the vast significance that had. At the same time, that messianic meal was an obscure but real version of *the* messianic meal, that perfect comradeship and kinship with him that would complete their happiness.

Word and offering, this prayer and action, made present the active Jesus. Only that activity had now—and this is extremely central to Christianity—a three-dimensional reality. First, it had been real as a series of historical events: birth, life, death, resurrection. Secondly, it was real insofar as it was made present again and had a real effect on men living afterwards. Lastly, the full effect of those events would only become evident when Christ came again. As a subsequent Christian prayer was one day to put it:

PAST.	This holy table-fellowship in which Christ is eaten, the commemoration of his passion,
PRESENT.	in which we are filled with grace (now),
FUTURE.	and where we are given the pledge of being one day like him.

The Eucharists, therefore, were representations of God's direct, planned, evolving impact on the world. God, the effective God, effective especially in Jesus, was made present in them. That influence of God in men, which had begun by giving him existence, and reached its climax in what had happened to man's representative, Jesus, was made active in its full breadth and depth, made present in the hidden, Incarnational way of words and gestures. The words particularly, uncovered something of the enormous reality beneath them. Aloud, slowly, meditatively, the president of the assembly would pronounce the 'commemoration' of a world that had enlivened his own beyond imagination. The oldest example known to us is that related by St Hippolytus. It

is more an outline than a fully developed example. Written down about 220, its aim is to set out the structure of the prayer according to the oldest traditions known to the writer. It has been shown to contain many echoes of Apostolic times:

THE FATHER.	We render thanks to you, O God.
THE SON.	Through your beloved Son Jesus Christ whom in these last times you did send to us as Saviour and Redeemer and the Messenger of your will.
Word and Creator.	Who is your inseparable Word, through whom you did make all things, and in whom you were well pleased.
Incarnation.	Whom you did send from heaven into the Virgin's womb and who, conceived within the womb, was made man, and was shown forth to be your Son, being born of the Holy Spirit and a virgin.
Passion and Resurrection.	Who fulfilling your will and preparing for you a holy People, stretched forth his hands as he suffered, that he might release from suffering those who have believed in you; who, when he was delivered to the voluntary passion, that he might abolish death and rend the bonds of the devil and tread down hell and enlighten the just and establish the covenant and show forth the resurrection:
Last Supper.	Taking bread, giving thanks to you, said; Take you and eat; this is my body which is broken for you. Likewise also the chalice, saying, this is my blood which is shed for you; when you do this, do it for my commemoration.
Commemoration Offering and Thanks.	Making a commemoration, therefore, of his death and resurrection, we OFFER you bread and the chalice, THANKING you because you have found us worthy to stand before you and minister to you.
THE SPIRIT.	And we beg that you send your Holy Spirit upon the sacrifice of the holy Church, gathering into one all its members who partake, that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of their faith in truth.

TO THE FATHER.

That we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ, through whom glory and honour be to you the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, now and world without end. Amen.

We notice the tone of these Eucharists. They were consciously enacted, thankfully, with a great Lord. We also notice the central point upon which they converge, for God bestowed life through the Son, and bestows a new life through the Son's sacrifice in the enlivening power of the Holy Spirit. The inner dynamism of the Trinity had come to work in men.

The focal points were Jesus' death and his new condition. 'Every time you eat the bread and drink the chalice,' said St Paul, 'you proclaim the death of the Kyrios.' That death of the Kyrios in the past was made present now. The Kyrios himself was present, Jesus as victorious, who gave them success. This meal was thought of as an anticipation of their full kinship with him of which it provided a guarantee. That was the thing they above all desired: the full coming to them of Jesus, the Kyrios. 'Come, Kyrios' was the prayer which we know the whole assembly to have exclaimed together at their Eucharist from the beginning of Christianity.

The choice of the words in the Eucharist was left to the president. The pattern, however, no one thought of changing. Just as the Jewish Eucharists had presented the development of God's action for grateful thought, so the Christian. Parts might be omitted; emphases might be differently distributed; one Eucharist might be much fuller than another; but the action reflected would be the same. There was only one God, and only one development of his plan for his creatures. And the pattern of it was that of the Trinity.

It would have been very strange if it had been otherwise. Our world is simply the work of three Persons. Its purpose is to bring men to those Persons. These three share full power and full existence in an ordered life. The imprint of that life cannot but be on the world, and particularly on the story of their work in their adopted family. The Father, both in himself and in his actions, is

the source and aim of all things. Also in this twofold sphere, the Son is 'the full expression of the Father's being' and the person through whom he executes his plans, while both live and act in the power of the Holy Spirit. So we find in the Eucharists, as well as in the early professions of Faith, the Trinitarian shape our story clearly shows. In St Hippolytus' Eucharist we heard of the Father, to whom the prayer was directed, creating and redeeming men through his Son, and of the Holy Spirit as he who was besought to enliven the Church now. And we may mention that the earliest 'Creed' known to us speaks of belief 'in the Holy Spirit present in the Church for the resurrection of the body.'

Futile was a man's life that was estranged from that one valuable current of action:

You have been brought close to God and admitted to his favour
through the power of the Kyrios, Jesus
through the Spirit of God . . . who dwells in you
A great price was paid to save you
Glorify the Father by making yourselves the shrines of his presence.

Everything was directed to the close presence of God, at present hidden, but which would one day be disclosed. The ordered action of these three sovereign persons to this goal, was at the forefront of a Christian's consciousness and shone through all his prayers. An old man who had known St John, Polycarp, probably echoing the Eucharist prayer he had said before his people on so many 'days of the Kyrios', naturally spoke a prayer entirely in this vein before his martyrdom. Before being brought to the stake he prayed:

Lord,
all-powerful God,
Father of Jesus Christ, your beloved and blessed Son
through whom we have knowledge of you.
I give thee thanks
that you have made me worthy of this day and hour
and to have a part with the other martyrs
in the chalice of your Christ
looking towards the resurrection

to eternal life of body and soul
in the immortality that comes through the Holy Spirit.
For this and for all your other gifts
we give thee praise
through your eternal high priest
Jesus Christ, your beloved Son.
Through him and the Holy Spirit
may your power be manifest
now and for ever.

If we recall what these Christians met, and what actions they did, at these Eucharists, the risks they were prepared to run in attending them will not surprise. It was a simple action, for all its width and depth. It always remained essentially the same. The words were added to and rearranged, but the thing they effected and expressed could not change.

These additions and rearrangements were often happy. For all the advantages of considering God in his actions—the way the Jews had bequeathed the Christians—and for all the light those actions shed on his nature, some Christians at least found that the grandeur of God was not made sufficiently plain to them. The first part of the Eucharist prayer—the part devoted to the Father—was therefore extended, for he was the source from whom the Son and the Holy Spirit derived. The new versions' Oriental, abstract character would make them unappealing to most Western people, but sentences at least are exceptions:

You are the source of life
the source of light
the source of all good favour and truth
friend of men
friend of the poor
to all forgiving
and drawing all men to yourself through your beloved
Son's becoming man.

We pray you make us living men
give us the life-giving Spirit
that we may acknowledge you the only truth
and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ.

After the part addressed to the Father all would exclaim a Jewish hymn to God. This was an exclamation at the fact the first part of the prayer just spoken had recalled: the hidden but penetratingly real fact of the Father. This was our present 'Sanctus'. 'Sanctus' means above mere earthly things, independent of them, because so much greater than they.

The repetition of the Last Supper forms the centre of the second part. The sacrificed Christ here made present is Christ come to the fulfilment of his work on earth and in a position to bring that work to effect in the new People of God, the Church.

Making a commemoration, therefore,
of his death and resurrection
we offer you bread and the chalice

the Eucharist prayer we have quoted of St Hippolytus said in this section. One early writer of the Church after another speaks of the real presence of Christ's actions in this commemoration. It is an

offering of Christ's presence in his body

Eusebius of Caesarea.

the renewal of his act of rescue
and the sacrifice of his thank-offering.

and

Through this sacrifice in which no blood is shed
we have a share in Christ, his sufferings, and his divine nature.

Gregory of Nanzianus.

Our High Priest is he who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us.
That sacrifice we offer now, that inexhaustible one that was offered
before.

It comes to pass as a commemoration of the former one.

For he said: Do this as my commemoration.

It isn't a different one to that which the High Priest offered formerly,
but we always offer the same one.

Or rather: we celebrate a commemoration of that sacrifice.

John Chrysostom.

That very same thing which Our Lord Christ really accomplished
and will yet accomplish

Those whom God's favour has made priests of the New Covenant
effect, by means of the sacraments, as we know by faith.

All the priests of the New Covenant offer, without ceasing,
one and the same sacrifice,

in all places and at all times,

because theirs is only one and the same sacrifice

that was offered for us,

the sacrifice of Christ our Lord,

who took death to himself,

and through the offering of the sacrifice purchased us fulfilment.

It is therefore plainly a sacrifice,

only no new one, nor his own, that the priest effects,

but it is a commemoration of that true sacrifice of Christ.

Christ now,

through means of symbols (signs),

is sacrificed.

So shall we be led to see,

when we look at the action of commemoration that takes

place now with the eyes of faith,

that he yet dies,

rises again to life,

and achieves heaven,

as was formerly accomplished for us.

Theodore of Mopsuestia.

All this takes place at the Eucharist. The early Christians were quite clear on this: At the Incarnation, God makes a human nature his own in order to be really present with us, 'presenting himself to us in human form' (Phil. ii, 7); at the Eucharist Christ becomes no less really present among us, presenting himself to us under the form of bread.

The priest 'draws down with his word the (divine) Word', wrote Gregory of Nazianus. Or, in the old Hebrew idiom that yet survived, 'the Name' of God—that is God himself as effective, operative in things, owning them and making them alive with his own power—was called down on the material things. 'The bread

is consecrated through the Word of God and the invocation.' (*Gregory of Nyssa*). The Incarnation had taken place by the Word or Spirit (their functions were as yet not fully distinguished) descending on a human nature, making it the property of God. In the Eucharist, the priest 'called down' the enlivening power of God—whether spoken of as the Spirit or the Word—to effect the same result as at the Incarnation, so that the God-man, Christ, was present. He was present, as we have just seen, as performing the great works of his life.

This 'calling down' went by the name of 'epiklesis.' The whole Eucharist prayer was the epiklesis. In the early Christian world a thing changed not according to its nuclear structure—of which it cared nothing—but according to what or who governed it and worked in it. The epiklesis was the prayer that begged and effected God's taking the bread and wine as his own, working in it and through it, making it himself.

So the Eucharist prayer was then understood, extremely rich in meaning. An active meeting with a person who was very much alive.

* * * *

The Eucharist prayer—or as it is now called, the Canon of the Mass—is surrounded, as in Justin's time, by other actions. In his day there was a reading ceremony; and then bread and wine were brought for the Sacrifice; and after the Sacrifice there was the Communion. Nowadays, besides these, we have one other action: a sort of introduction to God's presence at the start.

How are we to appreciate these actions? Obviously the essential will be to understand the general drift of each of them. This means that we shall have to concentrate on the main elements of each action, especially since today there have grown up elements in each which have little direct bearing on the central meaning. Hence to go through every element giving equal emphasis to each must make the wood invisible for the trees. We can fit the less vital elements into the general scheme once the central pattern has been put into relief.

Probably as good a method as any is to see each action of the

liturgy as it was in fact practised at the time when it contained no more than its general structure: the time when those additions had not yet grown up. And since by its very nature a liturgy is not a museum piece but a lived experience, we could see it through the eyes of someone of those times. We need not invest him with any lyrical or mystical gifts. It will be enough if he enables us to see that liturgy as an ordinary person taking part was expected to see it.

It is natural that the period chosen must be different for each action. Obviously some parts took longer to develop than others, and the opening action was only beginning to take shape when the Eucharist action had already taken on some additions which contribute little to its main theme. The important thing is to deal with the essentials first and gain a clear grasp of what each action does and the frame of mind necessary to take part in it. Then the unessential and sometimes confusing added elements can be briefly mentioned after each section.

I. THE OPENING ACTION

How our Mass begins depends on which Church one attends. For the size and amenities of the Pope's Churches enable us to approach God more suitably than we can in those where lack of space forbids an impressive processional entrance.

That is, of course, what this action is about: we *approach* our creator, a very great Lord. Not merely to come into his presence but to sacrifice there, on that altar, with Christ, to him. We shall not leave this Church before Christ has, as you might say, walked into it—for it is just as real as that—and done again, with us, his act of victory over death and love of his Father.

Our first task, therefore, is to take a clear view of the sort of person we are being introduced to. We make the approach to God a deliberate, conscious action. What strikes us at once is that a meeting with the King of the World is a solemn, magnificent act and one of great joy.

The Introit. That is what the opening song expresses as the Pope, with his assistants, comes slowly towards the altar for his sacrifice

and ours. The Jews, long ago, expressed their simple thoughts and prayer to God in poetry, rugged in character and varied in theme. These psalms of theirs we use as our opening songs. They think of God as one who had rescued them and who would rescue them again; as one who delighted in his power to do good to his People and in all his creation, but who would have no truck with evil. They were the spontaneous prayers of a people sometimes successful, sometimes in affliction.

Occasionally, after the altar has been reached, we all sing the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the beautiful hymn to the three persons of God. And then the ceremony is brought to its conclusion. It is summed up and brought to a climax in a prayer.

This summing up is done by the priest as the spokesman for all. It is emphatically everyone's prayer. This is heavily underlined by the fact that the words that introduce it, 'God be with you', are always used to lead up to the prayer that comes at the climax of each section of the Mass.

And so we all, with the priest as our mouthpiece, put a final seal upon our purpose of meeting God. The words of our prayer are simple. They usually take the form of a request; although sometimes praise of God is included. We express our recognition of the relationship between God and ourselves: we, full of need; he, the ruler of all, and yet our friend.

We make known our needs, then, to the Father, and we tell of the greatness of this friend of ours. We address him as 'All powerful and everlasting God.' But we remember at the same time through whom we have access to this friend, remember who is 'the way and the life'. It was Jesus who brought us into favour with the Father and through whom the Father implements his plan for us. And so we end the prayer with 'Through Christ our Lord.'

* * * *

The simple structure of the opening action has since been rather obscured. The *Introit* is seldom an entrance song, but sung or said later. The *Kyrie eleison* is the remnant of a list of requests (a litany) which was introduced here from the next section where

we shall meet it. Nevertheless, the *Introibo* psalm and the *Confiteor* and attendant prayers are expressive and apt.

2. THE READING SECTION

We are now in God's presence. That presence must be rendered more vivid. Who is this God with whom we are occupying ourselves? A capricious despot who has no care for us? A fiction of human superstition? If he is real and interested in us, what have we received from him?

It is essential that we regard the person to whom we are to sacrifice more closely and accurately. If the sacrifice is to have any meaning at all, it must express our spontaneous reaction to that person. We must look steadily at what God is.

And now, as the Readings from the Bible are made to us, we are doing precisely that. We are giving thought to what God is, discovering his characteristics and calibre, as we do anyone else's, by what he has done.

It is imperative that we should give, here and now, before we advance with the rest of the Mass, some thought to the way in which, in this and its later parts, the liturgy presents God to us. Unless we put ourselves at the liturgy's viewpoint of seeing God we shall not gain the clear and concrete awareness of him which it offers us. This will only be to place in sharper perspective what we already know. But that perspective is indispensable.

The way in which the liturgy sees God is the way in which he has always presented himself to us, in concrete deeds done for us down the long development of our race. He invites us to come into contact with himself, not through abstract ideas of essence, nature, and so on, but by seeing him in action. The Reading Ceremony, therefore, and the rest of the Mass for which it sets the viewpoint, is concerned with God in action: it looks at him in the whole compass of his enormous plan with the universe, in a vast effectiveness, energising and bestriding the whole of history.

Now this plan goes in four stages. And just as a man's life can only be properly understood if it is seen as consisting of stages of

babyhood, childhood, manhood and old age, where one stage leads up to and develops into the next, so can God's plan and field of action only be seen as four stages, one developing into the next.

FIRST STAGE

Creation

Fall

Jewish History

leading up to

Christ.

And so, in this part of the ceremony, we are being introduced to God in the full extension of his effectiveness, as one who bestrides history, active at each of the four stages of the world's life. That stage leading up to Christ: there is God evolving, with a majestic unhurriedness, his creation, the gigantic convolutions of the universe; there is God with man, his special creation, offering him a share in his joyous, abounding activity; and then, when man prefers himself denuded of God to himself sharing in the boundlessness of God's own life, there is God letting his special creature, reduced now to his purely natural powers, develop gradually and naturally in history until the time comes for God to show himself and intervene with a Covenant. We know the rest of the story. But we cannot contemplate it without perceiving the vastness of its chief actor; his immense effectiveness and power; and his persevering love.

SECOND STAGE.

At the second stage God is more evident still. He is one of us. The slightest awareness of the size of the distance between God and man would suggest that for God to become man is impossible. But supreme reality, which has so much life in it that it needs three persons for its

Jesus' life.

very realisation, has entered our world in human shape.

So here is the immense power and personality of God amongst us. And that personality grips and pervades the world it has entered, suffusing it with that unlimited vigour and value that is his. Not that humanity is distorted. Increased, not thwarted life is the object in view. Hence the method of the divine entry into our world is a patient and human one. Our Lord's methods of giving the good news were gentle and gradual.

Death
Resurrection
Pentecost.

Until the events of his death and resurrection and his sending of the Holy Spirit which brought that life to its ultimate achievement.

THIRD STAGE.
Christ in us.

Human nature, in Jesus, had been raised to God's standard of life. The object of Jesus' life on earth was that our human nature, we ourselves, should be similarly raised. And that is what he is accomplishing now: hiddenly, for we were to keep our freedom, but none the less really for that. Jesus, the Kyrios, is with us always with the power of the Holy Spirit. He is present most effectively in the messianic meals.

FOURTH STAGE.
Afterwards.

But we speak and think in shadows. We can only have clear knowledge of things that fall in the restricted range of human experience; and this plan of God's has to do with a world too big for ordinary unassisted human experience to clearly see. 'Eye has not seen, nor the ear heard,

nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those that love him.' Little, if anything, can be added to that sentence. The size of it precludes our knowing it at present. We are destined for a life that is very full. Those first three stages are the way that human beings, developing in time, are enabled to grow into that life before this final stage when it becomes clearly active in them.

That is the size of history. It is a mighty symphony that begins weakly, almost diffidently, and then gathers momentum, each movement superseding the last in confidence and power, until the serene climax is achieved. The whole has been planned and executed by God; only the medium in which he works is not sound, but men: millions of men, millions of atoms, millions of years. And the thing to seize is not merely that the thing is vast, but above all, that it was planned. That all previous history led up to man being raised up to God: first in the Incarnation, and then, as the consequence of the Incarnation, in each Christian, and, finally, in the full clear enjoyment of its consequences in God's home.

Never, of course, in one Mass is the whole plan delineated. But it is the backcloth against which we are expected to understand the parts of it brought to our attention in each Mass. If there is an Old Testament reading, the significance of what it relates will be its preparation for the greater stages yet to come. The Gospel stories tell of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, teaching and acting to bring us his own fellowship with God. The Epistles bring to mind how that actually took place with the early Christians and how the way they were directed to work this out by Paul and the others must be our way, too. And all the time there is recalled to us the great, but hidden, object of this plan: our Father's home.

And so each facet of the plan presented to us must, to be rightly understood, be seen in its context: against the backcloth of the four stages into which it fits. Only as part of that context, as a part of that process evolving towards the fourth, final, stage, has it significance. In some Masses the whole process is clearly brought before us. For instance, at the Epiphany Mass.

The first reading is not from an epistle but from an Old Testament prophet, Isaiah. Written originally when Israel was in exile, and begging God to realise for it his promises of rescue and the New Age, the prophecy assures Israel that these will be granted:

Rise up, Jerusalem, and shine forth;
Thy dawn has come, and the glory of the Lord has broken upon thee.
Darkness may envelop the earth, and all the nations lie in gloom;
But upon thee the Lord shall dawn,
over thee his splendour shall be revealed.

This manifestation (epiphany) of God was realised in the rescue of 537. But he came far more fully at Bethlehem. And the second reading tells of that fuller manifestation when his personal coming was proclaimed in the sky and known to strangers:

Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Juda, in the days of king Herod. And thereupon certain wise men came out of the East to Jerusalem, who asked, Where is he that has been born, the king of the Jews? We have seen his star out in the East, and we have come to worship him. . . .

Two stages were yet to happen. It was individual men in every country and time that God was seeking for. He wished to befriend them in this life hiddenly and later in all clarity. And the Collect of the feast shows how the epiphany at Bethlehem happened for the sake of God's personal epiphanies to each of us:

O God,
who by the leading of a star
didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the nations;
grant us this grace,
that we who know thee now by faith

may after this life attain to the glorious vision of thy Godhead, through the same Christ our Lord.

This introductory ceremony of the Readings shows us some parts of the plan of God, what he has actually done in word and action. Its purpose is to remind us what God is through consideration of what he has done. And the next part of the reading ceremony, which we call the 'homily', is inserted to help towards this. For it is an explanation of the readings we have just heard, underlining their significance and their relevance to our lives. As Justin described it little more than a century after Christ:

On the day which is called Sunday we have a common assembly of all who live in the cities or in the outlying districts, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as there is time. Then, when the reader has finished, the president of the assembly verbally admonishes and invites us all to imitate such examples of virtue.

God has spoken to the assembly, and now the assembly speaks to God. We express our admiration at the vast scheme of things that he has caused to be for us and which he has brought to its culmination in Christ. Christ himself is for us. He has done everything a man could for our happiness, as the Gospel reading in particular has just reminded us. We acclaim this with a Jewish song, the reader singing it to music that matches the mood of the message just read out, and the rest of us taking part by repeating a simple refrain.

We have just heard the first reading; after it we sing a psalm and sing enthusiastically and in unison, Come, let us adore him.

Now 'Let us pray' is said. There is some minutes silence while we dwell on all we have just heard. And then the priest makes a prayer for all.

To understand the significance of this prayer we must recall the Jewish synagogue service. There the readings themselves had been preceded by a list of requests ('a litany', as we call it) for

God's continued aid for his people. In the Christian reading service God speaks first, giving concrete grounds, especially in the life of his Son described to us in the Gospel readings, for the assurance that he is ready to help man. And then the assembly makes the natural response: they put all their trust in this ruler who has gone to such lengths in love of them. We make known to him the needs of our family, the Church, confident of his help:

We beseech Thee for an abundance of divine goodness upon the spotless Church of the living God set up throughout the world. Lord, have mercy on us.

We entreat thee, Christ our Lord, for the holy priests of God the all-powerful, for the ministers of the sacred altar, and for all people who worship before the true God. Lord, have mercy on us.

Especially do we beg the manifold wisdom of him who is the Word of God for all who are right bearers of the word of truth. Lord, have mercy on us. . . .

and so the requests continue.

* * * *

The usefulness of this ceremony is now returning as the Bible Readings reach us increasingly in a language we understand. With the improvement in our knowledge of the Bible and its ways of thought, those readings are beginning to mean much more to us, though the process has hardly begun as yet. Of the list of requests there only remains the *Kyrie eleison*, now placed in the previous section.

3. THE OFFERTORY

Many of my fellow-christians in the church are destitute. The priest is coming down to the nave for our gifts for them. I try to realise what I cannot see but which I know is there, the person of God. I know him acting everywhere. And then it occurs to me that these destitute people are like Christ was before his Resurrection: apparently entirely insignificant, and not always

attractive, but in fact very fully alive. The life is God's: life at its full voltage. Incredible as it is, we are all living it here and now. Baptism makes us like Christ.

The point is that in helping these people we are dealing with something valuable: we are furthering lives and possibilities like Christ's, and taking part in a great enterprise.

For the enterprise for which the universe was created, and allowed to develop over so many years, was the spread of God's family. That is the extent of his limit-cancelling power: investing the worthless with his own value. So that instead of being lonely, inert affairs, our lives become expansive and joyful. Not a dry procession of fading trivialities, but rich personalities acting together in a human way.

History makes it plain that here we have the explanation of this giving we are now being bidden to, as the priest comes down to the nave for our gifts. From the beginning there was a sense of acting together and of appreciating the God-lent worth of each other. To a Christian of the first centuries this came home best in a shared meal. The early Eucharists were, of course, linked to this shared meal. To these 'agapes' (love-feasts), as the meals themselves were called, one brought oil, cheese, wine, vegetables and milk and shared them with the rest. It was a joyous occasion, and one where everyone was united, each supplying the other's needs. And because one was so close to God, in this religious ceremony, it was easy to be aware of the facts behind this mutual charity. The common meal ceased to form a part of the Eucharist in the first century, but this offering of gifts is retained for our expression and fomenting of this Christian-fellowship and spirit of sacrifice.

The sacrifice is a joyful one because of the work in which it forms a part, and hence the music the choir is providing while we are making our gifts. Some of these gifts, some of the bread and wine, will be used in the Sacrifice that will take place presently. They will be consecrated into Christ himself. And this calls to mind the last and culminating feature of sacrifice: even if it is primarily directed to our neighbour, it ultimately has to do with God.

For sacrifice is always the same, and sacrifice in the New Testament expresses the same as sacrifice in the Old. It expresses our delight and desire of belonging to God, of devoting ourselves and all our powers to God's service. We recognise something at least of the wonder of God, and we want to be possessed by that person because he is the only person who comes near to satisfying us completely.

These sacrifices we are making for our neighbour are a way of putting some of our possessions at the disposal of God. They will help members of his family and further his plan. And our giving them is an expression of our eagerness to hold all we have and are at God's service, to be as close to him as possible.

That is why this act of giving now before Christ's sacrifice comes so suitably. We are going to share in Christ's sacrifice. How imperative, then, to put ourselves previously in a frame of mind of sacrifice, to deliberately and thoughtfully make a sacrifice to him, however slight, first.

Now that the gifts have been collected round the altar, food of all kinds, all the necessities of life, and now that the bread and wine to be used later have been chosen, the singing has ceased and the priest will sum up the simple ceremony as he does at the end of each main section of the Mass with a prayer. He will dedicate these gifts to God aloud and on behalf of us all. This is 'The Prayer over the offerings.'¹

* * * *

Today the Offertory ceremony is more explicitly a preparation for the Eucharist itself and its many new prayers take their inspiration from it. The people no longer have an evident part in presenting to God the material things, the bread and wine, for the Sacrifice, though the prayers accompanying the priest's offering of them are very beautiful. Most expressive, too, is the prayer he says as he pours water into the wine in the chalice.

And yet in spite of several no longer very meaningful additions, the two essential elements of the ceremony remain. First a collec-

¹ Now called 'The Secret'.

tion is made which will be dedicated to those in need. The needy will be primarily the priest himself. He must be provided with a reasonable living so that he may devote his time not to earning a livelihood but to visiting and helping his flock.

There are also, as we know, many other needs. Of children, for example, to receive one of the most enduring of all benefits, a Catholic education. Of our fellow-parishioners, present and future, to have a Church in which the great act of meeting God in prayer and sacrifice can be fittingly performed, and countless others.

And then occurs the other essential element of the Offertory: what was called 'The Prayer over the offerings'. This is called 'the Secret' because, to fit in with the Frankish mentality of the Middle Ages, it is said inaudibly, so that it is no longer very evidently the prayer said on behalf of all giving explicit expression to the common desire to offer the things just given to God. Yet, when we have offered our gifts, we may still silently join the priest in prayers like this:

Lord,
may our gifts prove apt for today's birthday rite,
and evermore shed peace upon us.
As this day's new-born human child shone with the brightness
of the Godhead,
so may the earthly substance of this offering bring the
divine within our reach.

(Christmas)

Look favourably, Lord, upon these dedicated offerings,
so that they may help our devotion and our salvation.

(2nd Sunday in Lent).

4. THE PRESENT SHAPE OF THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist prayer is the Mass. The preceding sections only aim at introducing it. The Communion is only its solid confirmation.

Its basic meaning and structure have already been outlined. The realism of this 'commemoration', which brings not merely

to the memory but to present existence Jesus at his most noteworthy, God who became like us at his most characteristic, in his deeds of love and triumph: this reality cannot but be there whenever Jesus' command to perform this ceremony again is fulfilled. We are necessarily drawn out of a merely human dimension into God's.

This reality is vested with words and movements. These have as their function to make us, who are vitally involved in what is taking place, vividly aware of that reality. For the Christians of the first centuries they did. They described who is the God active here, his work of creating all things, his living plan for men, the climax of his love in Christ's death and rising to new life, and the significance these have for our present and future.

The prayers and customs that have grown up in the Eucharist prayer since the fourth to the ninth centuries obscure more than they reveal its meaning. Factors that have contributed to this can be briefly set out as follows: first, the Mass could not be translated into other Western European languages when Latin ceased to be universal in Western Christendom because the Celtic and Frankish languages were not yet literary and had no translation of the Scriptures; secondly, the part assigned to the layman in the Church was diminished on account of his inferior position in society, and this was reflected in the lesser rôle accredited to him in the Mass: this and the Frankish temperament made the Eucharist for the laity a silent and remote prayer; thirdly, an impoverishment of the first part of the Eucharist prayer which was given the name of 'Preface' and no longer seen as belonging to the Eucharist prayer at all; and, fourthly, the transference to the Eucharist from the Reading Ceremony of prayers of petition.¹ The consequence is that we have a Eucharist prayer that is hardly recognisable as such, is spoken silently, and in what is to most people an unintelligible language. Yet the former structure can still be discerned, especially where the so-called Prefaces are still rich in content as occurs in the great Feasts. We shall look now at the Eucharist prayer of, let

¹ viz. Both "Memores" prayers, the "Communicantes", the "Hanc Igitur", and the "Nobis Quoque."

us say, the one of Pentecost, omitting the less essential parts for the moment.

PRAYER OF THANKS

Right indeed it is and just, proper and for our welfare that we should always and everywhere give thanks to thee,

TO THE FATHER
WHO HAS WORKED
THROUGH THE SON
AND THE SPIRIT

Lord, holy Father, all-powerful and eternal God, Through Christ our Lord, who ascended above all the heavens, and taking his seat at thy right hand, sent down the Holy Spirit as he had promised, upon his adopted children; therefore it is that the whole round world exults with overflowing joy;

PERHAPS A REFERENCE TO
CREATION THOUGHT TO TAKE
PLACE THROUGH THE ANGELS.

The heavenly Virtues likewise and the angelic powers together chant an endless hymn in praise of thee singing,

HYMN TO THE FATHER

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Thy glory fills all heaven and earth. Praise in heaven. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Praise in heaven.

PRAYER OF OFFERING TO
THE FATHER THROUGH
CHRIST IN THE CHURCH

And so through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord we humbly pray and beseech thee, most gracious Father, to accept and bless these offerings . . . which we offer thee in the first place for thy Holy Catholic Church.

PRAYER ASKING GOD TO
MAKE THE BREAD AND
WINE HIS OWN, TO
CONSECRATE IT: THE
EPIKLESI^S CF. P. 80-81

We pray thee, God, be pleased to make this same offering wholly blessed, to consecrate it and approve it, making it no longer material and now acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of thy dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

MAKING PRESENT AGAIN
THE LAST SUPPER

He, on the day before he suffered death, took bread into his holy and worshipful hands and lifting up his eyes to thee, God, his almighty Father in heaven, and giving thanks to thee, he blessed, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, all of you, and eat of this, For this is my body. In like manner, when he had supped, taking also this goodly cup into his holy and worshipful hands, and giving thanks to thee, he blessed it and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, all of you,

COMMEMORATION
NOT ONLY OF THE
LAST SUPPER BUT
ALSO OF:

AND SACRIFICE

THEN TWO MORE
OFFERING PRAYERS

IN THE LIFE OF THE
THREE PERSONS
SHOWN FORTH

THE PEOPLE'S
CONFIRMATION
OF THE PRAYER

and drink of this. For this is the chalice of my blood of the new and everlasting Covenant, a mystery of faith. It shall be shed for you and the many (= all) so that sins may be forgiven.

Whenever you shall do these things, you shall do them as a commemoration of me. And so now, Lord, we thy servants, and with us all thy holy (= very own) People, making a commemoration of the blessed Passion of this same Christ, thy Son, our Lord, likewise his Resurrection from the grave, and glorious Ascension into heaven,

Offer to thy sovereign majesty, out of the gifts thou hast bestowed upon us, a sacrifice that is pure, holy, and unblemished, the sacred Bread of everlasting life, and the Cup of eternal salvation.

. . . through Christ our Lord,

Through whom it is ever that these good gifts created by thee, Lord, are by thee sanctified, endowed with life, blessed, and bestowed upon us, Through him and with him and in him, together with the Holy Spirit, thy wonderful personality and life is shown forth and honoured, all-powerful God, for ever.

Amen.

This prayer is present, even when the Preface is less expressive, for even then the first part usually thanks and praises the Father 'through Christ our Lord', which sums up in a phrase the whole work of Christ that is not further mentioned. Only the prayer is no longer evident, both on account of the historical factors just noticed and also because, in the Middle Ages, the Eucharist was thought of less as an action we perform than as the coming of God to us. The original idea of it where we join Christ in a movement to the Father was overshadowed by one where God was active and we only passive. Consequently, the movements and ceremonies that used to help one be conscious that it was a

common action, now, in the present medieval shape, as the hymns are sung, the priest, perhaps, in a Gothic Church, far from us, praying a silent prayer, the torchbearers and everyone else falling on their knees, all this makes us conscious only of Christ coming to us, we being passive, though prayerful, spectators.

Since the aim of this book is to be concise, little more will be said on the present form of the Eucharist in spite of the fact that its richness of meaning can never be exhausted. The main thing is to realise its chief trend of meaning, which should be easily done from the outline written above. One can only regret that at present less help is given to this realisation by external words and movements which in fact can contribute to it so greatly. One may also regret the insertion of the prayers of petition; not because they of themselves are out of place here, for in any meeting with God, and especially in this most intimate and sacrificial one, we should treat God as one naturally does a kind father; but because our minds will not do justice to more than one idea at a time, and the essential idea in this part of the Mass is that of thankful, 'commemorative', sacrifice. The prayers of petition would seem to fit better into the Reading Ceremony, their original place.

The conclusion of the Eucharist brings the prayer to its profoundest force: the divine, therefore three-person force that gives everything life and vigour: that Trinitarian dynamism that we meet everywhere. Especially we meet it in this offering through Christ to the Father. That is why the priest, in so far as his other movements allow him, raises the sacrificed Christ in token of offering throughout this concluding prayer. A creature can hardly express more than this, and all make the expression their own with 'Amen'.

5. THE COMMUNION

We have said our 'Amen' to the action of the Prayer of Thanks, underwritten it as something we share in. Now we make it our own more tangibly than by words. The Messianic meal has reached its climax.

A meal is, in any event, a form of fellowship: it makes for a

special closeness between those taking part. When Christ chose it as the form this to-be-repeated rite must take he did so in full consciousness that it had this significance for his countrymen and followers.

So we begin this part with the president imitating Christ's action at his last supper by taking the consecrated bread and breaking it into smaller pieces for distribution to all. From the beginning it was noticed that this sharing in the one bread which its breaking into pieces and distribution brought about, linked all those present into a common action, a common unity with the person who the bread was. As St Paul once wrote:

We have a cup that we bless;
 is not this cup we bless a participation in Christ's
 blood?
 is not the bread we break a participation in Christ's
 body?
 Because it is the one bread (that we all share in)
 we are all one body
 by the fact that we have all had a share in
 one and the same bread.

Since we all receive the same sacrificed 'bread' (Christ)—and the Corinthians to whom he was writing knew that to eat something sacrificed to God was to take up close fellowship with him, and still more with Christ here—and since we are all thus brought together to such living closeness to Christ, we cannot but be close to each other in this fellowship we share: we are 'one body', one closely knit society, by reason of this shared food.

All is ready for the completion: Christ effectively present, and prepared by the president to share his most intimate companionship amongst us. It is hardly surprising that at this most solemn moment we address the Father with the prayer Jesus himself composed. We put ourselves in the frame of mind he himself recommended as the ideal one. The prayer of the whole assembly this, although how we join the priest in saying it differs from one country to another.

HALLOWED BE
THY NAME
THY KINGDOM COME,
THY WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN
GIVE US THIS DAY
OUR 'DAILY' BREAD.

We beg our Father that he will make himself (= his 'Name') manifest for what he is, the one true God, in the deeds and history of his People. For if only men can be got to let themselves be guided by the Father's will, all will indeed be well with them. Once they do fulfil it, and thus allow the Father to direct their destinies by his wisdom instead of thwarting his plans for them, then the Kingdom will come: it will be a household where God's love for men can be entirely effective. Basically, with Jesus, the Kingdom is already here. But completely not until the end, not until what was pictured as the messianic meal reaches its perfect fulfilment. It seems likely that the last petition of this first part of the prayer begs for this since 'daily' may be a mistranslation. In any event, we cannot but have the ultimate fulfilment of this meal-fellowship with Jesus, which is being hiddenly anticipated in what we are doing now, in the forefront of our minds. For could we pierce the screen of words and signs we should be overcome by the reality of the presence of such a person amongst us. And we cannot too often remember that the screen is a make-shift affair. We are so much richer than we imagine.

So let us work out that closeness to God in our lives. We must be 'holy'. And that word only means drawing near to God, of which doing his will is in practice an essential part, and drawing

away from sin. Our last petitions are for that second and negative side of our joining with God to come about:

AND FORGIVE US OUR SINS
 AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO OFFEND AGAINST US
 AND ALLOW US NOT TO BE OVERCOME BY SIN
 BUT RESCUE US FROM THE POWER OF THE EVIL ONE (= SATAN).

Then, there is the prayer '*Libera nos quaesumus*'; we show our love for one another in this new family as brothers of the same Kyrios by an embrace of friendship; and then he takes yet another ordinary physical means to come so intimately and dynamically united with us and us with him: he comes to us in form of food. So concludes this action whose drift words can delineate but never convey the depth and scope.

* * * *

The basic structure of breaking bread for this common meal, the 'Our Father' with its addition, the concern for peace amongst us, and, as the culmination, the receiving of the Kyrios as food, are still present, but, once again, filled out.

After we have prayed for the coming of the Kingdom and our rescue from evil in the 'Our Father', there is the breaking of bread—for the order is now reversed between them. Since it took much time for the one consecrated bread to be broken into sufficient fragments for distribution for all, a prayer was devised in the seventh century for the people to sing while this was taking place. They would make a threefold invocation to the 'Lamb of God', one of the titles that call to mind Jesus as he who rescued us by his death, and he is present particularly as such at this moment. This invocation still takes place, though it no longer accompanies the bread-breaking ceremony which occurs before it. The friendly embrace (Kiss of Peace), now restricted to the clergy, follows it at High Mass.

There is little need to dwell here on the three prayers that precede the '*Domine non dignus*'. The first is an introduction to

the Kiss of Peace. The second is a particularly beautiful one in that it presents the whole scheme of God's plan for us:

FROM THE FATHER

Son of the living God, by the Father's will,

IN THE POWER

And the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, didst by

OF THE SPIRIT

thy death bring life to the world, deliver me by

THROUGH THE SON

this most holy Body and Blood. . . .

ALWAYS TO THE FATHER

And never allow me to be parted from thee.

IN THE FAMILY OF

THE THREE PERSONS

But a final mention must be given to the present bread-breaking ceremony, for it has a large though less obvious significance.

Now that we no longer share in the same large piece of bread that is broken up for distribution to us, but instead consecrate previously prepared particles, we have largely lost a ceremony that did bring plainly to view that we meet Christ as a closely-knit family sharing the same bread. The loss need not be a very serious one, for other means are at hand to remind us that we must always live and act as a family, bound closely together as fellow-brothers of Christ. For though the bread is no longer shared in the same way, the person who comes to us in form of food is. And all the time we have consciously been taking part in the same action, praying, singing, and moving together in a body.

But there remains, nevertheless, a breaking of bread. And in so far as it yet retains a function, this will be its ancient one. When the priest breaks the bread he is performing an—admittedly not very obvious—gesture of unity among all.

It is also all that remains of a gesture of unity with the bishop. The bishop used to break off parts of his consecrated bread and send them to his own priests to be mingled with the consecrated wine in their chalices. He was, after all, their shepherd in place of Christ, and they were bound to him by ties of filial affection and trust. The Church that Christ founded, like the Church of the Old Testament, was intended to be no haphazard conglomeration, but an organised, led, society, and the bishops are the leaders. As St Ignatius wrote eighty years after the death of Jesus:

Take care, then, to partake of one Eucharist, for one is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one the cup to unite us with his blood, and one altar,

just as there is one bishop assisted by the presbyters and the deacons, my fellow servants.

The fragment that is mingled with the wine is now from the priest's host, and not from the bishop's. But an echo of a great truth once expressed by that mingling remains in it. For all these prayers and ceremonies in this last part of the Mass aim only at uniting us with Christ at the Communion wholly awake to what our action means. We, God's favoured People, are united with a person: a person we must grow to resemble, sharing in the life he leads. Without him we are of no lasting significance. With him at our side there is nothing that we do not possess, for the Father becomes our father. Three persons have life and power at their fullest. Now we are members of that family.

We must not be too earnest about this. You do not talk about your membership of your family with bated breath, but with pride, glad that you have kinship in it. You cannot be very earnest when you are very joyful: joy is a vigorous mentality, while seriousness can be a little wan. The communion song that accompanies this action is to express gladness at what we have been made and confidence of what we will be. The Father's love for us has accomplished more than we can guess.

IV

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

WE have tried in this book to get a realistic view of our world, to discover what is happening in it. To be true to the facts this view had to be a wide one, because, as we have seen, everything in our world is part of a gigantic plan of its owner by which he is imparting as much true happiness into it as the free personalities of his creatures will allow him. For it was fully human persons, not abstractions, that he wished to make happy: men who lived in different centuries, traditions, and mentalities. Such he created them and such he would enrich them.

His attitude to his creatures was entirely that of love. The love of a person who has everything, for ordinary human beings who of themselves have nothing, is the only purpose of all that he has done in this world. It sets the keynote of joy which should pervade the life of every man who will open his eyes to the whole picture.

Now what actually confers happiness on us is a closeness to a person who possesses both the fulness of God and our own nature. He came, lived, and conquered, not for his own gain—he already, as God, lacked nothing—but that we might share in a richness of human life that would make that of the wealthiest millionaire bleak. He came to show us how to live on a full scale and to enable us to achieve this. We were to become like him, act like him, and above all take a part in those actions of his which introduce a human being even to God's home and scope of existence, enabling him immeasurably to surpass his merely natural destiny. Those actions were, primarily, his own becoming God and man, his being enlivened with the Holy Spirit, and then his death and

resurrection with all their results. And those actions, because they were actions of a person, took their meaning from their motive. That motive was complete dedication to all that is good: the supremely desirable Father, and this good reflected in his creatures. And because of that fineness of motive, and by means of those actions, he won the sort of life men saw him live after his resurrection. If our life is to bring us anything of lasting value it can only be through acquiring that mentality and making those actions our own, so that the prize also may be ours.

How are we to give practical effect to this? Where are those actions that we may make them our own? They are not present visibly; but our eyes can only perceive material things limited in time and place. But they are really present, in signs. This is to say that we can perform those actions by taking our part in certain words and movements through which those actions are lived over again. It is not the clearest way; but it is the clearest way open to us. For just as our Lord's life did not reach full clarity until after his resurrection, nor does ours. And yet the reality is truly there, and those words and movements are capable, if rightly understood, of making that reality very alive for us. And it is by the deep realisation that this can give rise to, of what Jesus did and why he did it, that his mentality of devotion to God and his children can best be formed in us, to set the tenor of all we do.

We have seen how this actually takes place—in the Mass, which we can best enter into as five actions. We must enter into them if the action of the Mass is to be fully our own. The words and movements are the principal means for our effecting this. And yet, as they are at present arranged, they could not be considered as ideal means to that end. This is the consequence of historical circumstances which no longer obtain: the semi-barbaric civilisation in which the Church had to develop from Gregory the Great onwards and the practical impossibility, that arose from many causes, of renovation from the time of the Reformation until the beginning of the present century. There is nothing to be wondered at in this. The Church, like Christ, takes human nature as it finds it and enlivens that.

This defect is now being righted. As the indispensable background, the growing appreciation of the Bible is enabling us to share in the standpoint from which both the Bible and the Mass looks at God, the fourfold plan of life, concrete, down-to-earth, historical. The other thing required is that we should make the five actions of the Mass our own. This will come from our understanding what their purpose is and how they fulfil it. To this our priest and books can help us. But the principal help would best come, as it was intended to come, from the shape of the actions themselves: simple, direct, and meaningful both in words and movements. This shape could be brought about if some adjustments were made and some additions dropped. The Mass would then look more or less like this:

FIRST ACTION: MEETING WITH GOD

JOYFUL ENTRY

The priest advances to the altar. Where possible the Introit is sung.

THE PRIEST ACKNOWLEDGES HIS UNWORTHINESS HE ASKS GOD'S HELP AND FORGIVENESS

'I acknowledge in the presence of the all-powerful God and Jesus Christ, our Lord and all those with him, that I have sinned in thought, speech and deed, through my fault. And so I beg all of you to pray for me.'

Priest: Thou wilt relent, O God, and bring us to life.

People: And thy People will rejoice in thee.

Priest: Show us thy mercy, Lord.

People: And grant us thy salvation.

Priest: Lord, heed my prayer.

People: And let my cry be heard by thee.

Priest: Take away from us our iniquities, we entreat thee, Lord, so that, with souls made clean, we may be counted worthy to enter thy Holy of holies; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIS, AS WE HOPE, OBTAINED, WE FACE THE PERSON WE ARE MEETING, AND ALL PRAY TOGETHER:

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of goodwill. We praise thee, we bless thee, we adore thee, we glorify thee, we give thee thanks for thy great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, God the all-powerful Father.

In Memory of Me

Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son, Lord God,
Lamb of God, Son of the Father; who takest away
the sins of the world, have mercy on us; thou who
takest away the sins of the world, receive our
prayer; thou who sittest at the right hand of the
Father have mercy upon us; For thou alone art
the Holy One, thou alone art Lord (Kyrios), thou,
Jesus Christ, alone art the Most High

with the Holy Spirit

in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

THE PRIEST GIVES THE
GREETING THAT INDICATES
A SOLEMN AND PUBLIC
CONCLUSION TO A SECTION

Priest: the Lord be with you
People: and with you also.

THE CONCLUSION OF THIS
SECTION

The Collect of the Feast.

SECOND ACTION:

WHO IS GOD? (= WHAT HAS HE DONE?)

THE PRIEST DESCENDS FROM
THE ALTAR TO THE
SANCTUARY
AND GIVES TWO READINGS
FROM SCRIPTURE FACING
THE PEOPLE AND
IN THEIR LANGUAGE
HE DRAWS OUT THEIR
SIGNIFICANCE IN A BRIEF
TALK

Sermon.

HAVING SEEN HOW GREAT
IS THE GOD WHO HAS
DONE THESE THINGS
AND WHO IS NOW
BEING MET
THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY
FACES ITS OWN
INADEQUACY

Some sort of 'Confiteor'.

ALSO RECOGNISED,
GRATEFULLY,
IS THE POWER AND LOVE OF
GOD THAT THE SCRIPTURE
READINGS GIVE INSTANCE OF
SO WE CONFIDENTLY
TELL GOD OUR NEEDS

Prayers of request.

THIRD ACTION: OFFERTORY

THE ALTAR IS PREPARED FOR
THE COMING SACRIFICE

The chalice and paten and the bread and wine
and water are brought to the altar.

THE COLLECTION IS MADE
AND BROUGHT TO THE
SANCTUARY

'The Offertory' sung

THE BREAD IS OFFERED

Priest: Holy Father, all-powerful, everlasting
God, accept this unblemished sacrificial
offering, through Christ our Lord.

THE WINE IS OFFERED

Priest: We offer thee, Lord, the chalice of
salvation, entreating thy mercy that our
offering may ascend in the presence of thy
divine majesty, for our own and the whole
world's salvation, through Christ our
Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE
OFFERINGS

Priest: the Lord be with you

People: and with you also.

Priest: what is now called 'The Secret' is said
aloud.

FOURTH AND CENTRAL ACTION: THE EUCHARIST

The first part (what are now called 'The Prefaces')
much extended, so as to explicitly 'commemorate'
what God has done.

Our simple reaction to this in the Sanctus and
Benedictus hymns.

When these two short hymns are concluded the
Eucharist prayer continues. (Perhaps the prayers
of petition, which now have a place in the second
action, are dropped from here so that the simple
pattern of this Eucharist can be plainly seen).

THE PRIEST CONCLUDES
BY RAISING THE
CONSECRATED BREAD AND
WINE IN TOKEN OF
OFFERING WHILE HE
SINGS CLEARLY

Through him and with him and in him, together
with the Holy Spirit, thy wonderful personality
and life is shown forth and honoured, all-powerful
God, for ever.

Amen.

ALL ANSWER

Amen.

FIFTH ACTION: THE COMMUNION:

PREPARATION

The Our Father and the prayer that follows are
said aloud, or sung.

PERHAPS SOME CEREMONY
OF RECONCILIATION
AMONG THE ASSEMBLY IF A
SUITABLE EXPRESSION OF THIS
CAN BE FOUND

THE BREAKING AND
MINGLING OF THE HOST

The assembly sings or the priest says the 'Agnus
Dei' prayer.

THE COMMUNION

To express the joy and solemnity of this a Psalm
is sung, 'The Communion' being inserted into it
as a refrain. These are sung to a simple melody
(or said), and in the language of the country.

SOME FURTHER PRAYER

CONCLUSION

Priest: the Lord be with you
People: and with you also.
Priest: 'The Postcommunion' prayer.

DISMISSAL

Priest: Go, this is the dismissal (or) Let us bless
the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

* * * *

Few would deny that we live in an age without an aim. Anyone who attributes the judgement Sir Charles Snow made in the 1959 Rede Lectures that 'the individual condition of each of us is tragic' to a morbid cast of mind has shut his eyes to the facts, besides being ignorant of Snow's trenchant realism. Snow, who is well acquainted with the contemporary scene from many angles, is only re-echoing the conclusion anyone must reach who does

not believe in God and who faces the logical consequence of his unbelief. Gibbon, in his *Autobiography*, Maugham, in his *Summing Up*, Osbert Sitwell in his autobiography, Shaw and many others acknowledge that consequence: that life can achieve nothing that will endure; and they face, sadly, the void that awaits them. Most people, since they lack the depth and largeness of mind to face the whole truth, try to hide it away from themselves in a whirl of passing aims. Christopher Dawson, in his *Progress and Religion*, expresses the contemporary mood:

We have entered a new phase of culture—we may call it the Age of the Cinema—in which the most amazing perfection of scientific technique is being devoted to purely ephemeral objects, without any consideration of their ultimate justification. It seems as though a new society was arising which will acknowledge no hierarchy of values, no intellectual authority, and no social or religious tradition, but which will live for the moment in a chaos of pure sensation.

It is facts that are wanted. Solid facts that point to life's purpose. To a man who will not conceive of a world bigger than his own, these are not available. If your pre-conceived views command you to obliterate all track of such a person as God in the world and to discount anything alleged there to have been done by him as legend, life must remain purposeless. You cannot unlock the door if you first throw away the key.

But God has acted. The more the evidence is scientifically examined—as it has been, intensively, in this new scientific Age—the more are the central teachings of his new People, the Church, confirmed, in so far as they are capable of being confirmed by merely human testimony. Science, which once looked as though it would shatter the Christian myth into the cobwebs that composed it, has, instead, thrown into clear relief the consistency and gladdening significance of events that took place. God did take a hand in our affairs. Christ did come. There is no limit to the promise our future holds.

That is the situation in which we find ourselves. Our 'situation' is composed of men *and* God. We can, if we wish, take part in a

development by which our manhood, like Christ's, is perfected by an unimaginable intimacy with God. We, all of us, living in a great society, can be God-like as well as man-like and resemble the Incarnate Christ.

As members of that Incarnation-like society (the Church), our lives become worthwhile. The invigorating force is from God; the motive is love. We long that this family of ours should flourish. We act to this end. It flourishes in human conditions, because the Church is Incarnational, 'the permanent incarnation of the Son of God' and therefore divine and human. Human beings live in different civilisations and different Ages. The contemporary task of the Church, our family, is always to act in the present civilisation, to bring God's Rule to our own world with its new precision of knowledge and methods, its practical scientific achievements, its vigour, and its great problem of how the industrialisation and education of the hitherto backward countries is to be worked out.

Our task is to bring Christ to the world. This means making some actions of God effective now, in us. Christ lives as he does now only because God accomplished in him the Incarnation, the Sacrifice, and the rising to new life in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is those actions which introduced the new life-principle into the world bringing the dessicated bones of mere humanity to boundless life. That happened, first, in Christ. Our only hope is that it should happen in us too. And in the Eucharist God makes those actions overcome time and space that we may share in them.

APPENDIX

These pages are not addressed to the ordinary reader, but to the theologian, who has a right to demand where the facts and opinions asserted in this book are justified scientifically.

NOTES ON THE CHAPTERS

(SQ=Scripture quotation(s)).

CHAPTER I

page

- 1-2 SQ, Psalm viii, 1, 3-4 and Psalm cxxxviii, 8-12.
- 4-5 cf. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum N.T.* (first editor G. Kittel)-(cited henceforth as *T.W.N.T.*) II, 105-137; III, 502-539; IV, 29-57; VI, 484-499.
- 4 SQ, Deut, vii, 6-8.
- 5-II cf. especially S. Mowinckel, *He that cometh*, 1956; also L. Cerfaux et al., *L'attente du Messie*, 1954 and *T.W.N.T.*, IV, 198-221.
- 5 SQ, 1 Kings, viii, 19-20.
- 7-8 cf. *T.W.N.T.*, IV, 1036.
- 11-13 cf. *T.W.N.T.*, VI, 330-451 and Mowinckel, op. cit.
- 12 SQ, Ezech. xi, 19-20. Joel, ii, 27-31; Isaiah, xi, 2-4.
- 13 cf., for example, W. Foerster, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, Part I, 3rd ed., 1959.
- 13 SQ, Nehemiah, x, 29; and Nehemiah, ix, 32.
- 13-16 cf. W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des alten Testaments*, Part I, 5th ed., 1957.
- 16-19 cf. *T.W.N.T.*, I, 562-595.
- 17 SQ, Ex. xv, 1 sq.
- 18 SQ, 1 Par. 29, 10 sq.
- 18-19 SQ, Jerem. x, 6 sq.
- 19-20 SQ, Ezech. xxxiv, 11 sq.
- 20 SQ, Isaiah, lii, 6-7.

CHAPTER II: PART I

- In general cf. R. Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich*, 1959
- page
- 21 SQ, Matth. iv, 17 (This is the meaning of Jesus's words here).
- 23 On the parables as a method of teaching cf. A. Charue, *L'incrédulité des juifs dans le N.T.*, 1929; *T.W.N.T.*, V, 741-59; C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 1935; J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 1954. The text given here is justified in Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 9 sq., 22, 61, 92. SQ, Mark iv, 3-8.
- 24 SQ, Matth. xi, 4-5, and John ix, 30-33.
- 26-27 SQ, Matth. xviii, 12-14 and Luke xv, 8-10.
Texts justified in Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 28, 30, 36, 75, 100, 106-7.
cf. also *T.W.N.T.* VI, 484-99.
- 27 Here, and throughout this book, I seek to present the early Jewish-Christian understanding of the Trinity. I learnt this chiefly from Father Cyprian Vagaggini (Dean of Theology at Sant Anselmo, Rome) in his lectures. It is derived from a consideration of Scripture, and Liturgical and Patristic thought, and is especially apparent in the earlier liturgies as we shall see later in this book.
- 29-31 cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum N.T. aus Talmud and Midrash*, 1922 sq., ad. loc.; O. Cullmann, *Peter*, 1952; O. Betz, *Zeit. N.T. Wissen.*, 1957, pp. 49-77, 252-72; A. Vögtle, *Bibl. Zeit.*, 1958, pp. 85-103; A. Oepke, *Stud. Theol.*, 1948-50, pp. 110-65; H. Clavier in *N.T. Studien für Bultmann*, 1954; J. Jeremias, *Golgotha und der heilige Felsen, Aggelos*, II; E. Flood, *O.S.B., Clergy Review*, 1958, pp. 584-94; *T.W.N.T.*, VI, 95-112.
- 29 SQ, Matth. xvi, 17-19.
- 32 SQ, John x, 11 sqq.
- 33 SQ, Ezech. xxxiv, 23 sq.
- 33-35 cf. L. Cerfaux, *Ephem. Theol. Louv.*, 1954, pp. 740-6; 1955, 331-42; id. *L'évangile de Jean et "Le Logion johannique" des synoptiques* (in M. E. Boismard, et al., *L'évangile de Jean*, 1958); H. Mertens, *L'hymne de jubilation chez les synoptiques*, 1957.
- 33-34 SQ, Lk. x, 21-22.
- 35 SQ, Isaiah xlii, 1. cf. *T.W.N.T.* V. 653-713 for a preliminary orientation on this much controverted question, which I do not, of course, pretend to settle.
- 36-37 SQ, John v, 17 sqq.

CHAPTER II: PART 2

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- 38 sqq. It seems almost (if not, indeed, entirely) certain that the meal Jesus celebrated was the Paschal meal, whatever day of the week it may have been: cf. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 2nd ed., Eng. trans. 1955, pp. 1-61; also A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the N.T.*, 1952, p. 20 sq., H. Schürmann, *Der Paschamahlbericht*, 1953, pp. 9-11, Higgins, *N.T.S.*, '54-'55, pp. 200-9, C. K. Barrett, *J.T.S.*, 1958, pp. 305-8. The rabbinical directives for the Paschal meal can be found in Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., IV; G. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeschua*, 1929; Jeremias, op. cit.
- 40 for the introduction to the Hallel cf. J. Gassner, O.S.B., *The Canon of the Mass*, 1949, p. 65.
- 41-42 The form given here for the blessing over the cup is that established by L. Finkelstein, *Jewish Quart. Rev.*, '28-'29, pp. 213-17. On the origin of these Eucharist prayers cf. J-P. Audet, *Revue Biblique*, 1958, pp. 371-99.
- 42-45 On the interpretation and translation of the consecrating words cf. J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (iam cit.); H. Schürmann, *Der Einsetzungsbericht*, 1955; G. Dalman, op. cit.; *T.W.N.T.*, V, 332-47 and my article in *Clergy Review*, 1959, pp. 332-47 where further references and discussion are given.
- 43 SQ, Isaiah, liii, 5 sq.
- 44 SQ, Jeremiah, xxxi, 31 sq. Isaiah, xlii, 6 and xlix, 8-9.
- 45-47 SQ, John xiv-xvii. cf. *T.W.N.T.*, III, 867-97 and VI, 720-5.

CHAPTER III: PART 1

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- 48-53 On the messianic meal cf. O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 1950; id., *The Meaning of the Lord's Supper*, 1936; J. Betz, *Die Eucharistie in der Zeit der griechischen Väter*, I, 1955. On 'do this in my commemoration' cf. *T.W.N.T.*, VI, 456-83; J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (iam cit.); W. van Unnick, *Ned. Theol. Tijds.*, 1950, p. 370; D. Jones, *J.T.S.*, 1959, pp. 183-91; J. Betz, op. cit.
- 49 sq. cf. *T.W.N.T.*, II, 235-58 and J. Dupont, O.S.B., *Sun Christoi*, 1952.

- 50 On Greek beliefs in an after-life cf. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des Grecs et l'évangile*, 1932.
- 52-53 cf. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, 1951; SQ, I John i, 18.
- 53-54 cf. O. Cullmann, *The Early Church*, 1956, id. *Die Christologie des N.T.*, 1957.
- 55-59 cf. T.W.N.T. VI, 330-451.
- 56 SQ, Acts ii, 4 sq.
- 59-62 cf. R. Schnackenburg, *Das Heilsgeschehen bei der Taufe nach dem Apostel Paulus*, 1950; id., *Münch. Theol. Zeit.*, 1955, pp. 32-53.
- 60-61 SQ, Romans vi, 1-11.
- 62-64 Background cf. E. Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr*, 1923. cf. F. Mussner, *Christus das All und die Kirche*, 1955; E. Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe*, 1946; T.W.N.T., VI, 297-304.
- 63-64 SQ, Colossians ii, 8-iii, 4.
- 64-66 P. Seidensticker, O.F.M., *Lebendiges Opfer*, 1954.
- 65 SQ, I Cor. v, 15 and Col. i, 20.
- 66-67 SQ, I John, i, 1-3.

CHAPTER III: PART 2

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- 69 Quotation from Saint Justin: 1st Apology, 67.
- 70-73 cf. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 1946; J. Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, 2 Vols., 1949 (and new 1 Vol. ed., 1959); id., *The Early Liturgy*, 1959. On "Kyrios" cf. books cited for pp. 50-52. On Sunday cf. the last cited book of Jungmann and O. Cullmann, *Die Christologie des N.T.*, 1957 (the chapter on the 'Kyrios'). Pages 71-73 are based on G. Dix. op. cit., from which the quotation is taken: p. 151 sq.
- 73-81 cf. especially, J. Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia* (iam cit.); J. Betz, op. cit.; C. Vagaggini, *Il senso teologico della liturgia*, 1957.
- 75-76 The translation is from J. Gassner, op. cit., p. 95-96. (slightly emended). On the early Creeds and the Holy Spirit cf. P. Nautin, *Je Crois à l'Esprit Saint dans la sainte Eglise pour la résurrection de la chair*, 1947.
- 77 SK, I Cor. vi, 11, 19, 20.
- 77-78 Saint Polycarp's prayer: Martyr. Polyc. 14.
- 78 Quotation from the Euchologium of Serapion.

- 79-80 Quotations from: Eusebius of Caesarea, *Demonstr. evangelica*, I, 10, 28; Gregory of Nazianzus, or. (Funerbris) 18, 29, and or. 4. 52; John Chrysostom, In Hebr. hom., 17, 3; Theodore of Mopsuestia, Hom. cat., 15, 19; *ibid.*, 15, 15; *ibid.*, 15, 20.
- 80-81 On the 'Name' of God cf. J. Betz, op. cit. and *T.W.N.T.*, V, 242-82. For a thorough study of the epiclesis question cf. J. Betz, op. cit. Quotations from Gregory of Nazianus, Epist. 171., from Gregory of Nyssa or. cat., 37, 3.
- 81-102 It will be convenient to divide the books used here into three categories:
1. On the principles of liturgical reform: Gaston Morin, *Pour un mouvement liturgique pastorale*, 1944; F. Arnold, et al., *Die Messe in der Glaubens-verkündigung*, 1953 (especially Father Ellard's article); L. Agustoni and J. Wagner (editors), *Partecipazione attiva alla liturgia*, 1953; G. Ellard, S.J., *The Mass in Transition*, 1956; C. Vagaggini, op. cit.; T. Maertens, O.S.B., *La pastorale de la messe à lumière de la tradition*, 1958; *The Assisi Papers*, ed. by *Worship*, 1957. It does not seem to me that there is, or can be, any great disagreement on the chief principles of liturgical reform as set out particularly in the books just quoted by G. Morin and C. Vagaggini.
 2. On the history of the liturgical movement: L. Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety*, 1954.
 3. On the history of the liturgy: the books already cited of J. Jungmann; M. Righetti, *Storia liturgica*, Vol 3, 2nd ed., 1956 and T. Maertens, op. cit.
- 82-84 cf. the books cited under category 3 above.
- 84-90 cf. especially Maertens, op. cit., pp. 36-71 and Vagaggini, op. cit., pp. 356-9.
- 89 Quotation from Saint Justin, Apology, 67 and Saint Augustine, Sermo 176.
- 90 Deprecatio Gelasii, quoted from Jungmann, *Missarum Solomnia*, I Vol. ed., pp. 224 sq.
- 90-92 The theory of the Offertory advanced here is that advocated by Maertens, op. cit., pp. 72-94. His arguments seem to make it the most probable of those advanced. J. Betz, among others, makes the Offertory a more integral part of the Eucharist. He does not seem to me to prove his view and so I have not felt able to adopt it. If, as is possible, I am wrong, not many alterations would have to be made in the text.
- 93-97 cf. especially Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, (iam cit.); Maertens, op. cit., pp. 24, 26, 51. and Vagaggini, op. cit., pp. 184-5, 225-6, 727-46. To question whether the present shape of the 'Canon' is ideal will seem extreme, or perhaps even very objectionable, to some readers. I can only refer them to the historical facts set out in Jungmann's

Missarum Solemnia and to the more summary and practical (as opposed to theoretical) presentation of them in Maertens' book. Whether the shape of the 'Canon' should be changed under present circumstances there may well be room for argument. But if the reader will calmly consider the facts that these two writers advance, I do not see any basis for disagreement with what I have written.

97-102 cf. the books cited under category 3 above.

98 SQ, 1 Cor. x, 16-17. cf. F. Mussner, op. cit.

99-100 On the 'Our Father' cf. Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., ad loc.; E. Lohmeyer, *Das Vater Unser*, 2nd ed., 1947; F. Chase, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church*, 1891; T.W.N.T., V, 242-82. Both textual and exegetical criticism of 'epiousios' continues. I find Lohmeyer's arguments very plausible, especially in view of the fact that the prayer seems to have been composed by Our Lord as a liturgical prayer, analogous to the litany of petitions in the synagogue service (cf. Maertens, op. cit., pp. 52-53). *Proof* for any translation of the word seems to be yet to seek.

100 Chase (op. cit., ad loc.) makes 'the evil one' seem overwhelmingly the most likely translation.

102 Quotation from Saint Ignatius, *Ad Philad.*, 5.

CHAPTER IV

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105-108 The shape of the Mass set out here is not suggested as necessarily the ideal one, still less as the precise one that will be adopted, but as indicating *more or less* what is being advocated by the acknowledged, responsible liturgical experts of today. To give this indication, the plan I have set out is simply an application of the resolutions made by the three last International Liturgical Congresses (Maria Laach, Sainte Odile and Lugano) that were encouraged to make official recommendations for Liturgical reform to the Holy See—recommendations which it is more and more adopting as time goes on—and also those made in a paper read at the Lugano Congress by Father Jungmann, of which the same may be said. This paper, and the recommendations of the Congresses, are published in the book edited by Agustoni and Wagner already quoted. The reasons for the recommendations will be found particularly in the books of Jungmann and Maertens already quoted. I feel bound to say that I have never met a person who has read Jungmann's book who could give a *rational* argument against some

such reform being introduced at a favourable time. (*Sentimental arguments are, of course, never wanting*).

- 109 Quotation from Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, p. 228.
110 Quotation from Cardinal Suhard in his *Pastoral Letters*, 1949, p. 11
(Taken by him from Möhler).

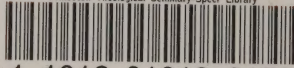
NOTE ON ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

I have used Mgr. Knox's version for most Scripture passages, except some of the quotations from Isaiah and the Psalms, for which I have used Mgr. Kissane's, and the parables and 'Our Father' (for which see notes on the relevant pages). But I have often emended Knox in the light of the books I have quoted or where he does not bring out the meaning of a Jewish idiom to modern ears. It would increase these already far too prolonged notes too much to justify each change; but they do not seem to be likely to meet objection from the scholar. I have used the Burns & Oates edition of 'The Roman Missal' for the present Mass.

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